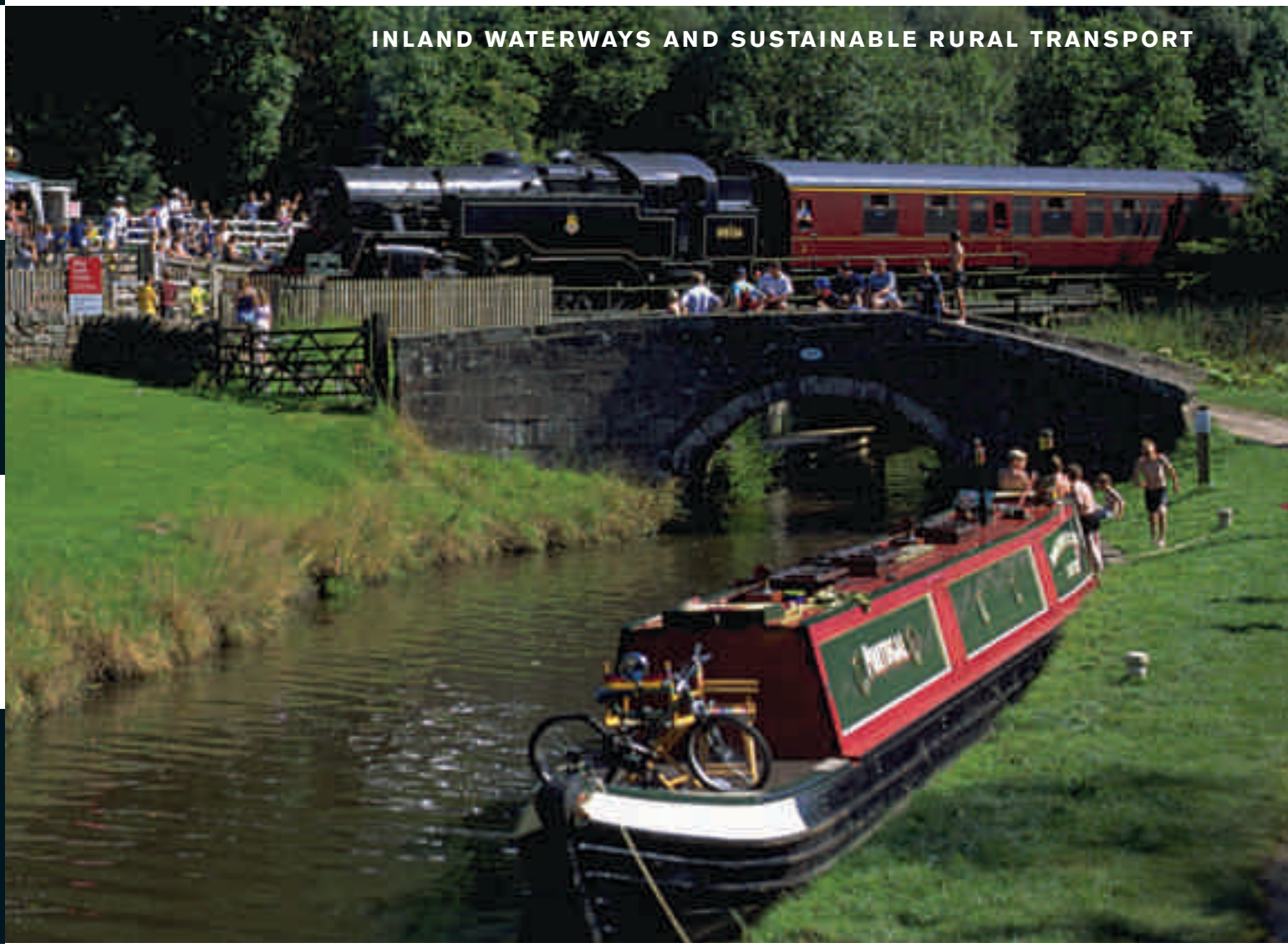
British Waterways

WATER WAYS

INLAND WATERWAYS AND SUSTAINABLE RURAL TRANSPORT



The Countryside Agency

Environment Agency

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE BY BRITISH WATERWAYS AND THE COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND AINA

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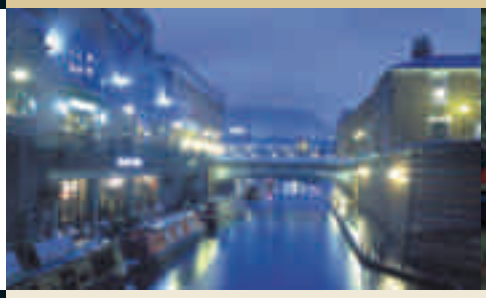
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Waterways help define the urban and rural landscape and can dazzle with their beauty. They also act as a magnet for visitors. In 2002/03, 34 per cent of adults in Great Britain made trips to water with boats, while 24 per cent made trips to water without boats[1].



In addition to the increasing use of waterways for recreation, many rivers and canals continue to perform important transport functions. In recent years, there has been an explosion in activity to restore the canal network and to improve opportunities for accessing waterways. Many miles of new waterside footpaths and cycle routes have been created, providing new routes for recreation and everyday journeys. The use of Freight Facility Grants has boosted interest in using the waterways network for freight, and other funding is helping to develop new passenger ferries.

This guide celebrates and shares the good practice that is taking place and aims to encourage further activity. Rural waterway projects can deliver much more than transport benefits; they can provide a focus for community regeneration. Urban areas, like Birmingham, have attracted much attention for such schemes; but they can also be found in rural areas.

The guide encourages the closer integration of waterways (both canals and navigable rivers) with the wider rural transport network in England and Wales. The revision of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) provides an important opportunity to achieve this.

Advice and inspiration is offered here for local authorities as they prepare the second round of LTPs. The guide will also be useful to managers in navigation authorities, helping them make better links with transport planners and providers.

The guide is based on research into a number of rural waterway projects. From these it draws lessons about the things which make projects work and distils a set of key criteria for success. These include:

- ensuring projects have vision and a supporting strategy
- working in partnership
- identifying project 'champions'
- involving local people
- achieving multiple objectives
- understanding users needs
- developing marketing and communication
- ensuring good rural design
- sound financial resources
- managing access and providing incentives to change travel behaviour

The guide demonstrates how waterway projects can contribute to the achievement of Government transport objectives. These are summarised in Table 1 below.

The aim of the guide is to stimulate interest in the rural waterways network and show how it can be developed to promote sustainable transport. In **Transport in Tomorrow's Countryside**, the Countryside Agency explains that 'Many small projects added together can have a major impact if well linked.' Waterway projects described in this document show how incremental, positive change can become a reality.

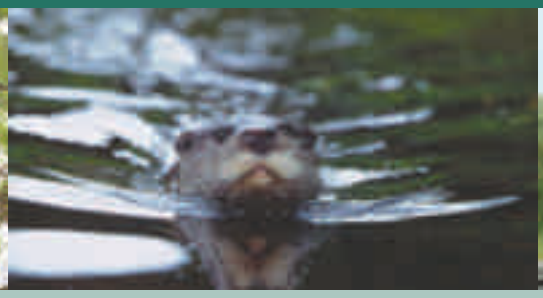
SUMMARY

Table 1: Waterway projects' contribution to Government transport objectives

KEY GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT GOALS	TYPE OF PROJECT	EXAMPLES (PAGE NUMBER)
Reducing congestion	• waterside paths for people commuting by bike and foot • visitor management to reduce car leisure travel	• Chesterfield Canal (44) • Lincoln's riverside path (43) • Kennet and Avon Canal (38) • Greenway, Devon (27)
Improving accessibility	• waterways as a catalyst for local services • improvements to foot and bike networks – making places easier to reach	• Oxford Canal (Lower Heyford) (45) • Spen Valley to Dewsbury Link (13) • York Millennium Bridge (24)
Increasing the level of walking and cycling	• attractive new routes for walking and cycling	• Trans Pennine Trail (36) • River Parrett Trail (47)
Improving public transport services and levels of use	• ferry services on canals and rivers • linking bus routes with waterway facilities	• Hampton Loade Ferry, Shropshire (25) • River Fal Links, Falmouth (47) • Kennet and Avon Canal (38)
Reducing the proportion of freight travelling by road	• transporting waste and aggregates by water	• Hackney's waste on water (41) • Lea quarry, Denham (40)
Promoting healthy activity	• new leisure routes for walking and cycling	• Camel Trail (37) • Grand Union Canal, Hertfordshire (45)
Urban regeneration	• waterways as a focus for regeneration	• Wolverton, Milton Keynes (50) • Stourport-on-Severn (31) • Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework (49)

SECTION ONE

Our cities, towns and countryside are enriched by water. Canals, rivers and estuaries add beauty and definition to the landscape. They have also long been traditional routes for transport – both the waterways themselves and along their wider corridors.



1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many waterways are now enjoying a renaissance, with activity to encourage new navigations and the provision of access to riverbanks and towpaths. British Waterways, for example, aims to double visitor numbers to its network by 2012. Waterways are also increasingly being recognised as valuable sites for redevelopment and regeneration.

This guide aims to celebrate and share the good practice that is taking place and to encourage further action in future. The report concentrates on the scope for closer integration of waterways and their corridors with the wider rural transport network.

To date, some of the best known waterway regeneration and development work has taken place in urban areas, such as the major conurbations of Birmingham and Manchester.

However, as this report shows, there are a number of exciting projects now coming forward in rural areas and their market towns. There is scope to extend this activity elsewhere.

1.2 WHO IS THE GUIDE FOR?

Many of the projects reviewed in this guide are the result of hard work by a range of organisations working in partnership. In particular, local authorities have a key role to play in ensuring that inland waterways are integrated with other transport-related policies. **This guide provides advice for local authorities as they prepare the next round of Local Transport Plans.**

Beyond this, the guide should continue to provide inspiration for other organisations that want to make better use of waterways including: British Waterways' waterway units, other navigation authorities, canal trusts and voluntary organisations promoting sustainable transport projects.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

The guide has five further sections. Readers do not need to tackle the whole report to get an understanding of the important role of waterways. Rather you may decide to pick and choose between the following:

Section 2 sets the waterways scene. It describes the inland waterways network and which organisations have responsibility for its management. It reviews the policy background to waterways development and rural transport policy. It goes on to consider some of the key transport issues facing rural areas and how better integration of waterways with the wider rural transport network can provide future solutions.

Section 3 looks at how to get the most from Local Transport Plans (LTPs). It considers the key steps to integrating waterways as part of the wider transport network in LTPs – from establishing a vision through to practical approaches to implementation.

Section 4 describes the main types of waterway projects and examines the key issues which arise when developing a project.

Section 5 comprises 15 case studies of waterway projects arranged under the following seven themes:

- promoting sustainable leisure journeys
- managing access to waterways
- using the waterways for freight
- connecting town and country
- addressing disabilities and social exclusion
- using the waterways for passenger transport
- developing a strategic approach

Section 6 summarises the lessons from the case studies and identifies ten key criteria for a successful project. It also shows how waterway projects can contribute to achieving Government objectives. It sets out the final conclusions of the report.

SECTION TWO

This section looks at who manages the waterways network and reviews the policy context for waterways and rural transport. It explains how waterway projects can help address rural transport issues and deliver a wide range of benefits.

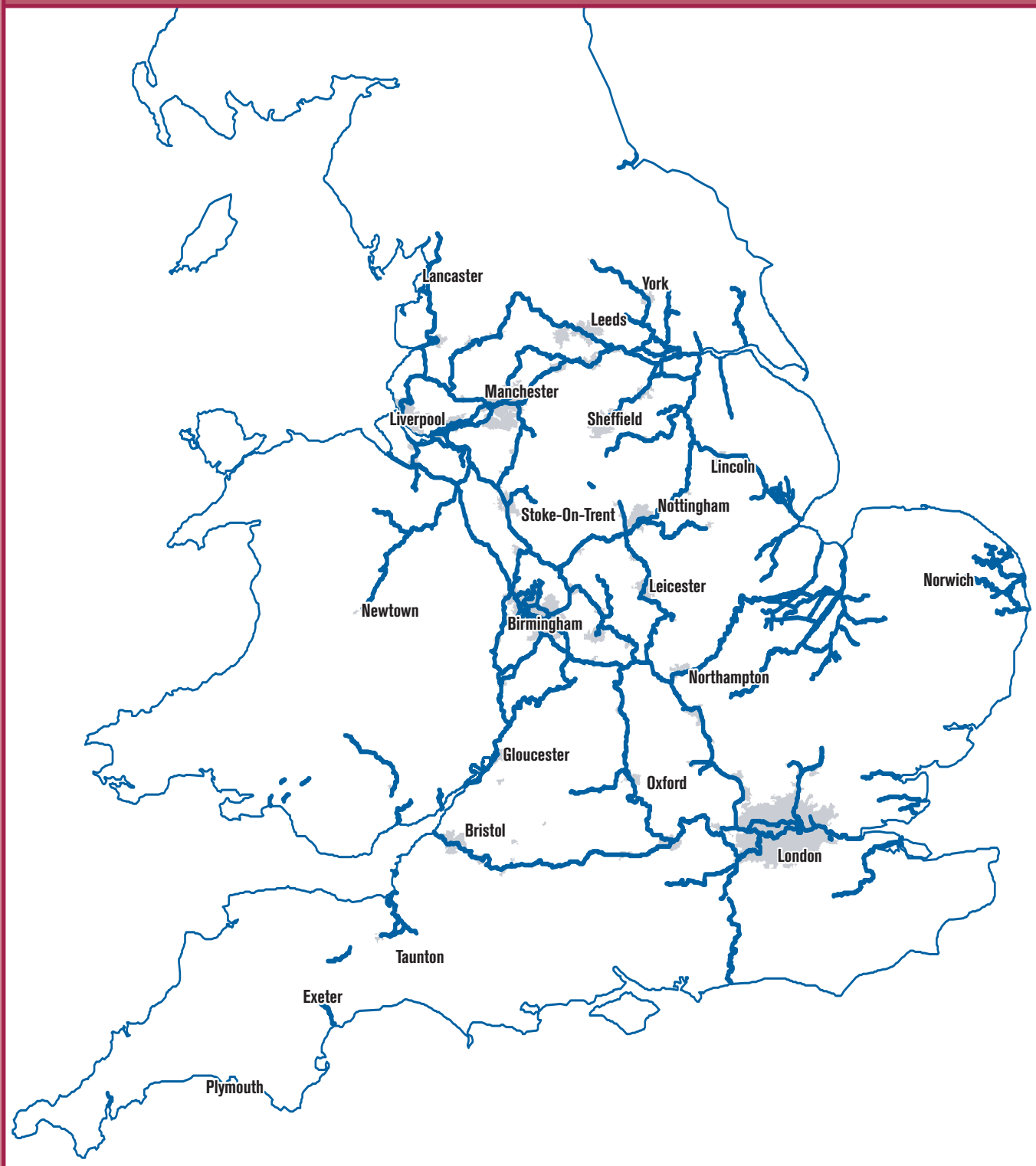
2.1 SETTING THE SCENE: THE WATERWAYS NETWORK

There are over 5000km of fully navigable waterways in England and Wales. In addition, there are around 900km of managed, unnavigable waterways and a further 2000km of abandoned unnavigable waterways; many of these are in line for restoration or could be used for other amenity purposes[2].

The inland waterways are an important part of the nation's heritage. The built heritage includes a wide range of buildings, structures and working features. The landscape and environment of the waterways is rich in wildlife and many lengths of canal and river are designated as nature reserves.

Responsibility for waterway management falls to a number of organisations (see Table 2 p.10). The majority of navigable waterways are the responsibility of British Waterways, the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority, who manage 51 per cent, 17 per cent and 3 per cent by length, respectively[2]. Around 30 other navigation authorities (including local authorities, trusts and charitable bodies, and private sector companies) manage the remainder. Whilst this guide has been written specifically for LTPs in England and Wales, the principles and projects described can equally be applied to inland waterways in Scotland.

THE WATERWAYS NETWORK



INLAND WATERWAYS IN ENGLAND & WALES MANAGED BY BRITISH WATERWAYS, ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND THE ASSOCIATION OF INLAND NAVIGATION AUTHORITIES

Table 2: Who's who in the waterway world	
British Waterways	British Waterways is a public corporation which operates on a commercial basis in line with its statutory powers and duties for navigation and the environment. It is expected to promote the use of its waterways for leisure and recreation, tourism, regeneration, and transport, while also conserving their built and natural heritage. **See www.britishwaterways.co.uk**
The Environment Agency	The Environment Agency is an environmental regulatory body and navigation authority which manages its waterways as an integral part of its other water management functions. It has a duty to promote the recreational use of all waterways (whether navigable or not) and an obligation to operate those for which it is responsible in an efficient and business-like manner. **See www.environment-agency.gov.uk**
The Broads Authority	The Broads Authority manages its water-space together with surrounding land on national park lines, combining its responsibility for navigation with conservation and the promotion of recreation. It has a duty to manage the Broads for three specific and equally important purposes: to conserve and enhance the Broads' natural beauty; to promote their enjoyment by the public; and to protect navigation interests. **See www.broads-authority.gov.uk**
The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA)	AINA was formed to bring together navigation authorities and provide a single voice on waterway management issues. It aims to provide a forum for sharing best practice and acts as a conduit for members' views to Government. It also promotes public awareness of the value and potential of the waterways network. **See www.aina.org.uk**
Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC)	IWAAC is a statutory body which advises the Government on strategic policy for the use and development of the inland waterways. **See www.iwaac.org.uk**
Inland Waterways Association (IWA)	IWA is a non-governmental organisation campaigning for the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of inland waterways. It acts as an umbrella body for a wide range of voluntary societies and trusts. **See www.waterways.org.uk**

Contact details for these and other useful organisations can be found in Annex 1.

2.2 THE POLICY BACKGROUND – WATERWAYS

Following the publication of the Transport White Paper in 1998, the Government produced a daughter policy document looking at the future of inland waterways. In **Waterways for Tomorrow,** the Government set out a clear vision for the waterways network saying that it:

'wants to promote the inland waterways, encouraging a modern, integrated and sustainable approach to their use. We want to protect and conserve an important part of our national heritage. At the same time, we want to maximise the opportunities the waterways offer for leisure and recreation; as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration; for education; and for freight transport.'

Waterways for Tomorrow, DETR, 2000.

British Waterways, as the public corporation charged with delivering much of this agenda, is taking action across a range of areas. It has established a target of doubling the number of people using its waterways network, while remaining committed to the principles of sustainable development.

In addition, it published its **Rural Regeneration Strategy** for British Waterways in 2000. This aimed to present a coordinated and balanced approach to rural regeneration and the role of the inland waterways.

In 2004, the Environment Agency published **Your Rivers for Life** which set out a three-year strategy for the navigable rivers for which it is responsible. In addition to establishing the overall approach, the strategy identifies three major action plans for the agency: rejuvenation of the Thames; regeneration work in the Fens; and action to restore orderly navigation on the River Wye.

2.3 RURAL POLICY AND TRANSPORT

The publication of the Government's Rural White Paper in 2000[3], the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001, and Lord Haskin's proposals for modernising rural delivery in 2003[4] all prompted widespread public debate about the role of the countryside and its future. This has led to a growth in awareness of the problems facing rural areas and their communities.

Lack of access to services and transport came to the fore as key issues for the countryside. Recent research has confirmed that transport is one of the biggest concerns for rural communities and the issue they most want to see addressed[5].

TRANSPORT IN RURAL AREAS – THE FACTS

- between 1980 and 1999 traffic on major rural roads rose by 93 per cent, while on major urban roads it rose by only 23 per cent.
- car ownership is higher in rural areas than urban. 84 per cent of rural households have at least one car, compared to the national average of 72 per cent.
- however, 16 per cent of rural households do not have a car and 20 per cent of adults in rural areas do **not** have a driving licence[6].

In its transport vision for the countryside the Countryside Agency said:

'Given the scarcity and dispersed nature of rural services and facilities, this significant minority of people without access to a car may face real hardship and social exclusion.'

Transport in Tomorrow's Countryside, Countryside Agency, 2003.

Greater awareness of such problems has been matched by a range of positive action across the country. There has been significant new investment in rural buses, new flexibility for rural public transport schemes, and action to protect rural services.

The Rural White Paper introduced a programme of Rural Transport Partnerships administered by the Countryside Agency, and every county now has at least one partnership. At the same time Millennium Lottery funds and other investment has kick-started the development of major new transport networks for enjoying the countryside (eg the National Cycle Network, the National Trails, etc).

Traffic free river crossings encourage cycling and walking: the Peterborough Green Wheel

A range of leisure activities by the waterside can also encourage business benefits to local communities

The challenges facing rural areas remain significant. Rural traffic is rising more quickly than that in urban areas and rural public transport remains vulnerable to cutbacks in services. Heavy lorries cause problems in many rural areas and speeding traffic contributes to high numbers of fatal road accidents[7]. Further action is needed to manage rural traffic levels and to enhance opportunities for access by foot, bike and public transport.

2.4 HOW CAN INLAND WATERWAYS HELP?

The Countryside Agency's own work and research by others (such as the Commission for Integrated Transport[8]) point to the need to improve accessibility in the countryside. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit has recommended that transport-related social exclusion be addressed by the introduction of accessibility planning. This should be a central feature of the second round of LTPs. The need to support rural facilities and to develop nodes for transport and services will be increasingly important.

In addition, the Government is placing increasing emphasis on the need to boost levels of walking and cycling. It has produced an action plan[9] on walking and cycling and the recent **Future of Transport White Paper** states:
'Our aim for the next 20 to 30 years is to increase walking and cycling. We want to make it a more convenient, attractive and realistic choice for many more short journeys, especially those to work and school'[10].

The inland waterways network has the potential to help meet these needs and to enhance access in the countryside. In particular, routes along waterways benefit from an absence of gradients and a traffic-free environment. They are attractive and relatively easy routes for walking and cycling. In addition, many routes link town and country and provide new opportunities for travelling between them.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

The Countryside Agency and Groundwork are leading a campaign to 'unlock the potential of the rural-urban fringe'[11]. Waterways can play an important strategic role in providing access to the countryside beyond built-up areas.

Initiatives like the **Christleton Commuter Corridor** project on the Shropshire Union Canal will help achieve this aim. The project, which is promoted by the Cycling Projects Fund, Cheshire County Council and Biffaward (via the landfill tax levy), will help provide 1600 local schoolchildren and 6400 local commuters with a safe and attractive route into their schools and places of work. With a total cost of around £200,000, the project delivers 2.7km of improved towpath and improved access points to the canal. It will result in a 21km continuous canal-side route from Chester to Ellesmere Port, linking urban areas to the wider countryside.

Further information: Andrew Wilkinson, British Waterways. Tel: 01606 723825

There are numerous new routes and networks being created to improve access by horse, bike and foot in the countryside. Waterway corridors can provide new links to help integrate these routes with the wider transport network. They can also enhance links within the established network of national and regional trails.

NEW LINKS

The **Spen Valley Greenway to Dewsbury Link** will be a new 3km cycle route linking the existing Spen Valley Greenway with the railway station in Dewsbury town centre. It is part of the larger Calder Valley Cycleway project.

The cycle route will run along the Dewsbury Flood Relief Channel on land owned by the Environment Agency. It will allow long-distance cyclists to access the train and also be attractive for local users. The project has been promoted by Sustrans, the Environment Agency and Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council, which has funded the estimated £120,000 cost from its LTP.

Further information: Tom Ghee, Kirklees MBC. Tel: 01484 225628

There are more than 114 waterside market towns in England and Wales[12]. Waterways can play a central role in their improvement or redevelopment, as well as providing an opportunity for promoting sustainable access.

REGENERATION

Wolverton, near Milton Keynes, undertook a Market Town Health Check in 2002. Exploring the potential of the canal corridor, and in particular its links with the town and the adjacent railway station, was one of the main objectives of the work. The resulting 'vision', Future Wolverton, sets the goal that in 20 years time the canal will:

'have become a major frontage of the town and been opened up to offer places to sit and enjoy a drink, play and walk. The canal itself will have been brought into a marina in the centre of town – Stratford Road, linked through one of the old railway sheds, now one of the heritage experience sites. There will be links across the canal, making access easier to the popular Ouse Valley Park.'

Further information: www.wolvertonunlimited.com

Finally, creating new opportunities for accessing waterways can help the local economy. Research has shown that inland waterways and their corridors can act as agents for the sustainable development of rural areas, delivering economic, environmental and social/community benefits[13].

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The **Kennet and Avon Canal** underwent major restoration between 1997 and 2002. Research for British Waterways has shown that visitors now make 7.7 million trips to the canal a year and spend £26m in the local economy. This is a 20 per cent increase on 1995. Of this income, £5m is from boating and £21m from towpath visits[14].

The Kennet and Avon Canal now supports around 1000 leisure and tourism jobs and 80 per cent of local tourism-related businesses have reported increased turnover since 2001. These include cycle hire, boat hire and accommodation for visitors to the canal, as well as local pubs and shops. The Kennet and Avon Rural Transport Partnership is helping to build on this success by promoting the wider canal corridor to a broader range of users.

Further information: Oliver Giles, Kennet & Avon RTP Officer. Tel: 01452 318000

SECTION THREE

This section reviews the key steps to integrating rural waterways as part of the wider transport network in LTPs – from establishing a vision, to practical approaches to implementation.

3.1 GETTING MORE FROM LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) have a lot to deal with. Government guidance for LTPs[15] encourages local authorities to consider a wide variety of transport modes and policy options appropriate to their localities and to integrate transport and other activities.

At the same time, LTPs are meant to focus on delivering a set of key outcomes: **improving access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need, in ways that are sustainable; improved public transport, reduced problems of congestion, pollution and safety.**

While LTP guidance has consistently emphasised the importance of addressing rural needs in LTPs, in practice most early LTPs did not devote much space to this issue. This was confirmed by a review of LTPs by Oxford Brookes University for the Countryside Agency in 2001 which showed that most LTPs were poor in their coverage of rural issues in general.

There is now the opportunity to stitch rural transport strategies and waterways projects more closely together as part of the overall LTP process. There are a number of factors in favour of this:

- the full potential of waterways projects for walking, cycling and public transport is more likely to be realised if they are integrated with the transport strategy for an area, and its wider links to development planning
- the requirement for revised LTPs to include Rights of Way Improvement Plans creates an opportunity to consider access to waterways in this context
- most schemes would benefit from complementary actions to manage traffic, to improve accessibility and public transport availability. This can be better coordinated and delivered as part of the LTP process

3.11 Other help

There is a host of other good practice advice available which complements this work. In particular, readers may want to refer to:

- **Local Transport Plans: A better deal for rural areas** – good practice guide by the Countryside Agency (available from **www.countryside.gov.uk**)
- **Walking and Cycling: an action plan** – comprehensive advice from the Department for Transport (DfT) on action to promote walking and cycling (available from **www.dft.gov.uk**)
- **Waterways and Development Plans** – a guidance document published by British Waterways (available from **www.britishwaterways.co.uk**)
- **Planning a Future for the Inland Waterways** – a good practice guide published by the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council (IWAAC) (available from **iwaac@btinternet.com**)
- **www.prowgpg.org.uk** – provides advice on preparing a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and links to many other sources of information on route planning

There is a range of good practice advice available

3.2 THE GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT

The new Transport White Paper, **The Future of Transport**, sets out a strategy for transport for the next 30 years. In terms of local transport, it places emphasis on achieving:

- freer flowing local roads, through measures such as congestion charging
- more, and more reliable buses enjoying more road space;
- demand responsive bus services that provide accessibility in areas not easily served by conventional services;
- more accessible services
- greater use of school travel plans, workplace travel plans and personalised journey planning; and
- creating a culture of improved quality of local environment so that cycling and walking are seen as attractive alternative to car travel

In addition, the Spending Review 2004 established the financial framework and spending plans for the next three years. As part of this, Public Service Agreements were agreed for all Government departments, including the Department for Transport (DfT). These are set out in Table 3 below and provide an important context for transport policy and planning.

3.21 What does the LTP guidance say?

Revised guidance for the second round of LTPs reflects the policy direction established in the Transport White Paper and the 'shared priority' for transport agreed between national and local Government. It establishes five priority outcomes which LTPs should demonstrate:

- reduced congestion
- improved accessibility
- safer roads
- better air quality; and
- action to address other quality of life issues

The guidance acknowledges that rural areas have particular transport needs. Annex 2 includes an extract with the main section that refers specifically to rural areas.

3.22 Why waterway projects are relevant

Waterways projects – if developed as part of the overall LTP strategy – can contribute to a number of the outcomes listed above. Most importantly, by:

- helping to boost cycling and walking
- providing attractive alternative routes for everyday journeys by foot and bike (encouraging fewer car journeys)

Table 3: Department for Transport Public Service Agreements

PERFORMANCE TARGETS

1. The Department is developing better measures of inter-urban congestion and will publish a new target by July 2005. The Department will also publish annual long term projections of congestion.

2. Improve punctuality and reliability of rail services to at least 85 per cent by 2006, with further improvements by 2008.

3. By 2010, increase the use of public transport (bus and light rail) by more than 12 per cent in England compared with 2000 levels, with growth in every region.

4. Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in Great Britain in road accidents by 40 per cent and the number of children killed or seriously injured by 50 per cent, by 2010 compared with the average for 1994-98, tackling the significantly higher incidence in disadvantaged communities.

5. Improve air quality by meeting the Air Quality Strategy targets for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1-3 butadiene (shared with DEFRA).

6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 12.5 per cent below 1990 levels in line with our Kyoto commitment and move towards a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010, through measures including energy efficiency and renewables. Joint with DEFRA and DTI.

- offering new routes for freight transport and waterborne public transport
- providing attractive locations with potential for regeneration; and
- offering opportunities for sustainable leisure in the countryside (helping to reduce leisure traffic – one of the fastest sources of traffic growth)

Achieving successful projects generally requires collaboration between different organisations, as well as successful cross-organisational working (especially between different local authority departments).

The case studies reviewed in Section 5 demonstrate that funding for waterways projects often comes from a wide range of sources, including LTP funds. In future, projects which can demonstrate that they complement the broad objectives of the LTP discussed above are more likely to be successful in gaining LTP funding.

3.23 The LTP process and rural strategies

Local authorities will submit their second full LTP in July 2005 to cover the period 2006/07 to 2010/11. In line with previous guidance, LTPs should contain five elements:

- a set of objectives representing the local authority's vision for local transport at the end of the second LTP period
- an analysis of problems and opportunities
- a long-term strategy to tackle the problems and deliver the LTP objectives
- a 5-year implementation programme of schemes and policy measures
- a set of targets and performance indicators

The Countryside Agency has elaborated on how local authorities can better address the needs of rural areas in its good practice advice on LTPs. In developing a rural strategy, it advises that local authorities complete a series of key stages, including:

- identifying a vision
- setting objectives
- developing the strategy
- ensuring it is compatible with other strategies
- developing the detailed programme of interventions; and
- monitoring and implementation

British Waterways' vision is that:
'By 2012 we will have created an expanded, vibrant, largely self-sufficient waterway network used by twice as many people as in 2002. It will be regarded as one of the nation's most important and valued national assets. Visitors will be delighted with the quality of the experience and as a consequence many will become active participants.'

The **Countryside Agency's** vision for the countryside demands: 'transport that enables people to gain access to the services and facilities they need and goods to be transported around, while at the same time maintaining and enhancing the quality of the countryside'[16].

The Countryside Agency's approach emphasises that while rural areas vary enormously, they share requirements for strategies which:

- enhance accessibility and manage the need to travel
- reduce impacts of traffic and transport on the countryside; and
- improve transport choice

Making better use of the waterways network can help achieve these requirements in rural strategies. Table 4 sets out the key stages in developing a rural transport strategy. It highlights how waterways issues can begin to be stitched into the process.

3.3 TAKING ACCOUNT OF WATERWAYS IN LTPs - ISSUES

As local authorities move from the early stages of LTP preparation, through to identification of policies and projects, a range of different issues will come to the fore. Some of the most relevant for waterways include:

- mapping and accessibility planning
- rights of Way Improvement Plans and the rural road network; and
- links with development plans and the regional strategy

3.31 Mapping and accessibility planning

In preparing the LTP, local authorities will need to gather as much information as possible about the existing and potential transport network. It is well known that rural areas are diverse and have differing needs and characteristics in terms of transport. The Countryside Agency's LTP good practice guide provides detailed advice on developing a better understanding of the needs of the rural area.

In addition, the statutory Guidance on Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) – issued by DEFRA - requires local authorities to assess the adequacy of local rights of way in providing access for exercise, outdoor recreation and the enjoyment of the area.

Table 4: Key stages in integrating waterways in rural strategies

KEY STAGES	THE WATERWAYS ANGLE?	POTENTIAL RESPONSE
Identifying a vision	Ensuring that canals and rivers are identified as potential corridors of movement and areas where access could be improved – for recreation and utility journeys. The potential for restoring unused or derelict canals as new walking and cycling routes (or as part of a wider regeneration project) should be recognised. Opportunities for linking town and country will be particularly important.	Involve British Waterways, the Environment Agency, other navigation bodies and canal trusts in early consultation on the LTP. Be aware of other local initiatives which could be complementary – such as Market Town Improvement schemes focussing on waterways. Refer to waterscape.com for a full list of towpaths and links with the National Cycle Network and National Trails, etc. AINA's and IWA's websites are also useful resources. Show rivers and canals in all consultation literature and mark options for improved access.
Setting objectives	Identify the potential for access along waterways and recognise the contribution this can make to other objectives (eg. reducing congestion, sustainable distribution, leisure).	LTP objectives should state the potential for promoting walking and cycling on routes along waterways. Better connectivity in the rural transport network can be achieved by improving key links with the waterways network.
Developing the strategy	Most waterways cross administrative boundaries. Successful strategies demand partnerships between local authorities and a range of different organisations.	Ensuring that key partners (British Waterways, the Environment Agency, Sustrans, etc) are brought together early on to help deliver the strategy. Working with neighbouring authorities to ensure that strategies for the waterways are integrated with each other.
Ensuring compatibility with other strategies	Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks provide an important context. In addition, local community planning processes will be important and link with initiatives such as the Countryside Agency's Market Towns Initiative. British Waterways' strategies, studies and business plans guide the management of canals and their surroundings. The Environment Agency produces local objectives called 'Local Contributions' to influence policy making at the regional and area level.	Rural strategies should aim to complement these other strategies, and to reflect their priorities where necessary. Project design – especially of transport projects – needs to ensure compatibility with protecting the environmental and heritage value of rivers and canals.

Table 4: Key stages in integrating waterways in rural strategies

KEY STAGES	THE WATERWAYS ANGLE?	POTENTIAL RESPONSE
Programme of Interventions	Rights of way along tow paths and rivers are often complicated and need special consideration. The risk of flooding along river banks, and the high ecological and heritage value of many waterways, needs to be recognised.	Issues of rights of way on towpaths and river banks need to be addressed by early consultation with the relevant authority, riparian owners and others. Scheme design also needs to take account of the potentially sensitivity of the setting in environmental or heritage terms.
Monitoring and Implementation	Some routes will need careful monitoring due to the ecological sensitivity of the surroundings (eg, disturbing wetland birds).	Monitoring with visitor surveys or foot counters can provide valuable information on the impact or success of a scheme.

It is important that local authorities take account of waterways as part of the existing or potential transport network. British Waterways provides detailed information on the status of all its canals and towpaths on the website **www.waterscape.com**.

In addition, both AINA and IWA provide a full listing of waterways by local authority on their websites (see Annex 1 for contact details). From these sources it is possible to build an accurate picture of the extent and condition of waterways in each local authority area.

Accessibility planning will feature prominently in the second round of LTPs and the Government published guidance on accessibility planning in December 2004. Accessibility planning software is also due to be made available to local authorities shortly. The process aims to promote social inclusion by helping people from disadvantaged groups or areas access jobs and essential services. As the DfT explains:
'Accessibility planning encourages local authorities and other agencies to assess more systematically whether people can get to places of work, healthcare facilities, education, food shops and other destinations that are important to local residents'[17].

Local authorities are expected to take the lead on this in undertaking accessibility analysis and preparing an accessibility strategy. Many of the solutions required are likely to involve specialised transport services, additional concessionary fare schemes or better service provision. However, improved walking and cycling routes will also be relevant. The LTP guidance encourages local authorities to ensure:
'that people can access jobs and services by walking and cycling – by improving routes and facilities, maintaining them in a more usable condition, improving Rights of Way in both urban and rural areas and making routes safer, more secure and more attractive'. (Part 3, paragraph 39).

In this analysis, it is important to consider using the waterway network to improve integration with existing walking and cycling networks. There are likely to be cases where fairly small scale improvements (such as the addition of new foot bridges, road crossings, new surfacing or signage) can open up the network further.

FINDING GAPS
Local authorities should undertake audits of walking and cycling routes to identify gaps and barriers in the network. It is a good idea to involve users, and user groups such as the Ramblers', the Cyclists Touring Club, and the British Horse Society, in the process. Local representatives of these groups are well placed to highlight where problems are occurring and to recommend action.

Rural paths alongside canals and rivers form attractive routes for leisure and recreation

3.32 Rights of way improvement plans and the rural road network

Following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, all local authorities now have a duty to prepare a ROWIP by 2007. Many local authorities already have work underway. LTPs will need to include a summary of progress on ROWIPs.

York City Council's ROWIP includes major existing rights of way along the banks of the River Ouse, the River Foss and the River Derwent. It aims to improve links from the city to the river banks. A key issue to overcome throughout York's RoW network is severance by major roads around the city. This is less of a problem on some of the riverside routes (because both river and path generally go under road bridges), but it does break up the continuity of the network. The City Council aims to provide safer crossing facilities in future.

In assessing how the network can be improved, council officers started with desk based research and maps to identify gaps. The aim is then to consult on various proposals for improving links within the network and to secure funding for implementation.

Further information: rightsofway@york.gov.uk

The preparation of ROWIPs offers the chance to integrate waterways more closely with the wider walking and cycling network. In addition to the positive recreational opportunities this could provide, it should also complement action to promote more commuting, school and shopping trips by bike and foot.

Cheshire County Council has undertaken research to examine the potential for local rights of way to contribute to sustainable travel. It found that the greatest potential was to be found in areas of relatively high population density with clear urban clusters. The work proposes a draft methodology for authorities to consider sustainable travel issues in ROWIPs (see **www.prowgpg.org.uk** for details). It should be noted, that while largely accessible, the majority of the canal towpath network is not designated as a Public Right of Way.

3.33 Links with development plans and regional strategies

Waterways - as linear features - frequently cross administrative boundaries. This demands that local authorities and other organisations work in partnership in their planning and management.

Regional Spatial Strategies will be particularly important in establishing policies for waterways. These should seek to maximise their use for transport and recreational purposes;

to conserve their environmental and historical importance; and to identify their potential as locations for development and regeneration.

YORKSHIRE & HUMBERSIDE'S REGIONAL APPROACH

Draft Revised RPG12 for Yorkshire & Humberside (June 2003) sets out clear regional policies for the use of the waterways. It relation to freight transport, it states that: 'the region must seek to build on its existing advantages of inland waterways and sea ports, both of which feature in the leading examples in the UK'.

Policy T4 elaborates on this in saying:
'In preparing Development Plans and Local Transport Plans, opportunities should be sought to deliver an integrated freight distribution system which makes the most efficient and effective use of road, rail and water (inland and coastal).

In particular, policies should be developed which:
a) seek to maximise the use of rail or water for freight movements from new developments and significant changes of use, as well as recognising the contribution these modes can make to the transport of bulk material (eg. waste);
b) seek to locate developments which generate high levels of freight and commercial traffic closest to intermodal freight facilities, rail freight facilities, ports and wharves or roads designated and managed as traffic distributors;
d) identify and protect existing and proposed sites for intermodal interchanges for road/rail, road/water, and road/rail/water
f) Identify and protect appropriate facilities for the loading and unloading of waterborne freight, having regard to issues such as landside transport links and potential conflicts of use and disturbance.'

Further information: www.rayh.gov.uk

Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and LTPs should reflect the regional context and work to implement the policies established regionally. For example, LDFs – which now replace local and structure plans - can contain specific policies for the conservation and development of waterways (eg, see Wyre Forest District Council's existing policy below). For individual LTPs, this may mean developing a project on a specific stretch of waterway, while working in partnership with neighbouring authorities to ensure compatibility.

Wyre Forest District Council, in north Worcestershire, has recently adopted its Local Plan (January 2004). This includes specific policies for the management of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal.

POLICY TM.8 The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal

Development which would enhance the tourism, leisure and recreational role of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal will be permitted, provided that:
(i) the character or appearance of the Canal Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced;
(ii) there is no adverse impact on the scenic, architectural and historic character or wildlife value of the canal;
(iii) the proposals are sensitively designed, and the form and scale of the development are appropriate;
(iv) use is made of appropriate materials; and
(v) the proposals comply with other relevant policies in the Plan.

Development proposals which would adversely affect the canal will not be permitted.

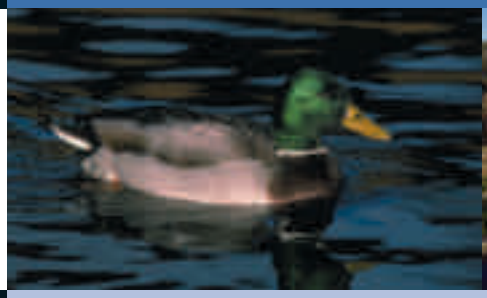
Further information: www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk

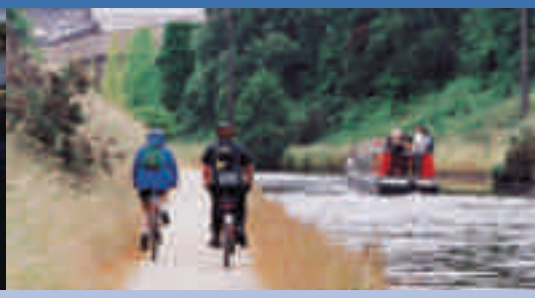
British Waterways has pioneered the role of canal and waterway corridor studies together with waterspace strategies. These examine the uses and activities on and alongside the water. They aim to establish a strategic context for taking forward area-wide developments, informing the preparation of development briefs and guiding significant applications within waterway corridors which cross local authority boundaries. These can act as supplementary planning guidance to the development plan and will also be relevant to the LTP. Further information can be found in **Planning a Future for the Inland Waterways: a good practice guide**, IWAAC.

On other rivers and navigations, the work of the Environment Agency is relevant. The Agency produces integrated Waterway Plans. These are strategic plans for all the Agency's navigation corridors. They are based on a GIS database and include strategic planning issues.

SECTION FOUR

This section looks at the range of waterway projects. It goes on to examine the key issues that arise in project development.





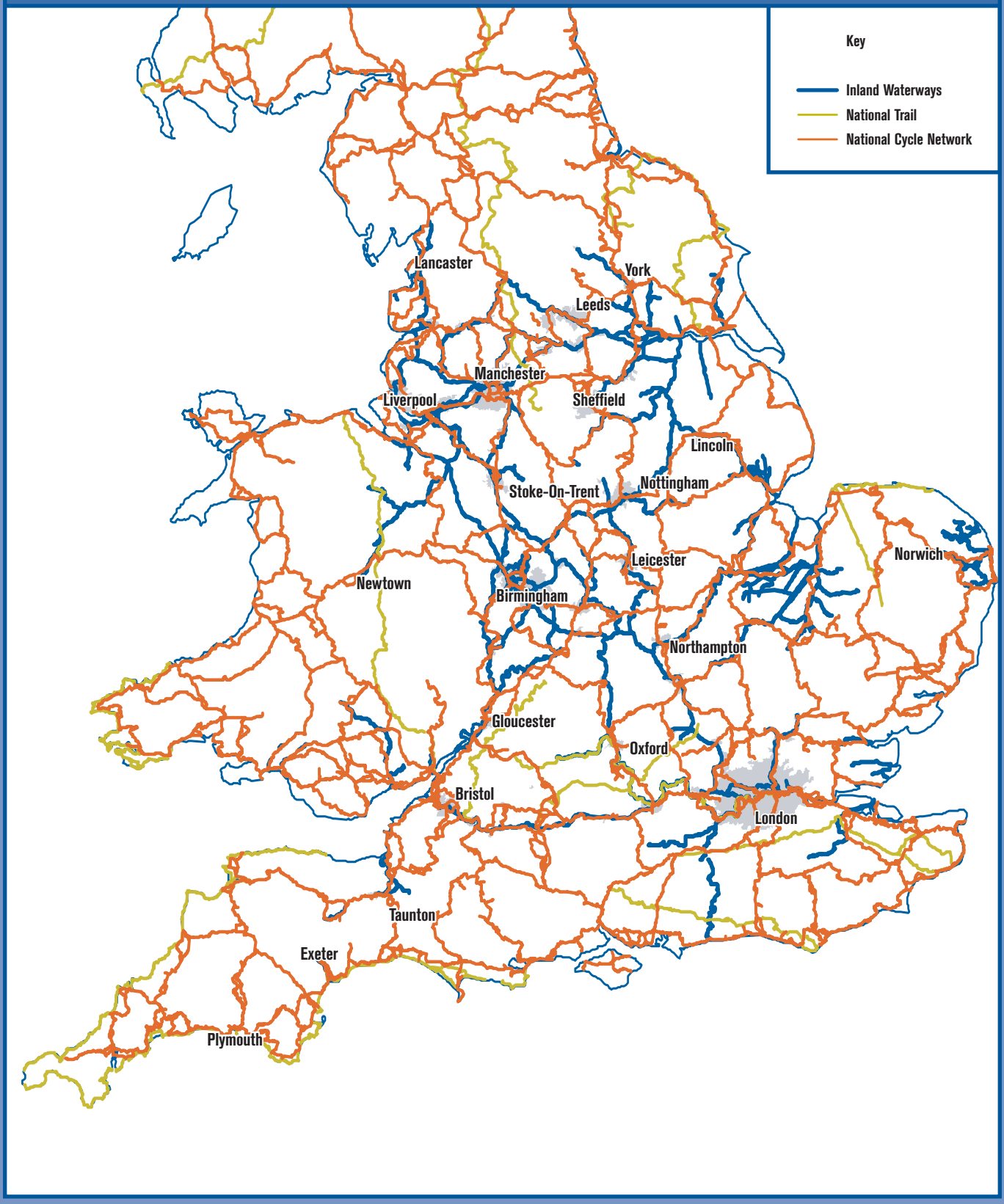
4.1 DEVELOPING WATERWAY PROJECTS AS PART OF THE TRANSPORT NETWORK

4.11 Promoting walking and cycling

Walking and cycling alongside water is a great pleasure, whether for recreation or everyday journeys. A large number of schemes have already been developed which make use of the waterway environment. The best known include the Thames Path, the Camel Trail and the restored Kennet and Avon Canal (see sections 5.12 and 5.21).

The development of the National Cycle Network (NCN) – coordinated by Sustrans – will provide 10,000 miles (16,000km) of safe cycling and walking routes in the UK by 2005. This, together with action to enhance and develop 2500 miles (4000km) of National Trails and |the introduction of Quiet Lanes initiatives and ROWIPs, has created a momentum for improving access in the countryside. New waterside routes can be incorporated in future projects and help carry the momentum forward.

THREE RECREATIONAL NETWORKS: INLAND WATERWAYS, NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK AND NATIONAL TRAILS



SECTION FOUR

A potential failing of some schemes is that they concentrate exclusively on creating a linear route. Too little attention is then given to creating links with the existing foot, bike and public transport networks or neighbouring services. In this way some of the potential for promoting local journeys by bike and foot is overlooked, and the benefits for the local economy are missed. Such schemes may also generate additional car journeys by visitors to the route.

MORE THAN JUST A FOOTPATH…

The River Parrett Trail, in Somerset, was created between 1995 and 1999 through a project which combined the development of a new recreational trail with the participation of artists and the local community.

Although the route was originally established for walkers, the aim was always to create 'more than a footpath'. As the trail enters its next stages of development, the project team is working to increase links with other routes and services. Initiatives include the development of a network of circular walks linking nearby villages to the trail, and signposting local businesses and attractions from the trail.

In particular, the Parrett Pub Project Trail is an interpretation project jointly promoting the Parrett Trail and the pubs that are along the route. Each of the pubs now has an exterior panel giving information on the trail, the pubs and the surrounding area.

Further information: section 5.53 and www.riverparrett-trail.org.uk

In cities like Lincoln, Birmingham and London real efforts have been made to incorporate riverside and towpath routes as part of the wider cycling and walking network. They are now used regularly by people commuting and travelling to school as well as for recreational purposes.

4.12 Creating links

Access opportunities can sometimes be greatly enhanced by simple steps to close key gaps and remove barriers in a network. In Lincoln, improvements by Sustrans to the waterside routes around the city have proved popular. The construction of a new ramp to help cyclists avoid a steep flight of steps has led to a threefold increase in cycling along the Fossdyke navigation channel to the village of Skellingthorpe.

Since rivers and canals themselves can act as a barrier to movement, new bridges and river crossings can be essential to improving links across a transport network. For example the Millennium Bridge in York, built in 2001, links two established sections of the NCN as well as local walking and cycling routes along the River Ouse. Usage of these routes increased by 59 per cent after the bridge was installed.

Auditing the local foot and cycle networks can help identify where problems exist. Action can then be taken to improve connections, particularly between town and country. Such action can include:

- reducing the speed and volume of traffic on busy roads, making them more attractive for walking and cycling
- new or improved footways – this can include new surfacing, wider footways or setting back routes from the road with a verge
- new bridges and walkways
- using Quiet Lanes to link waterway routes to the wider transport network

(See **Rural Routes and Networks**, Countryside Agency and ICE, 2002 for a detailed discussion of this issue.)

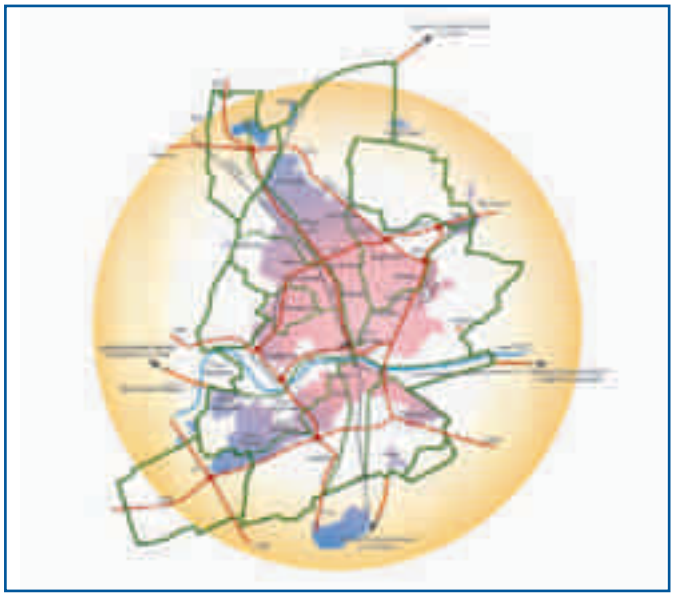
GREEN 'SPOKES'

Peterborough has developed the Millennium Green Wheel Project. This is a network of cycleways, footpaths, bridleways and quiet roads that provide safe, continuous routes around the city with 'spokes' linking residential areas to the city centre. A particularly important element is a cycle route linking Peterborough with Whittlesey that involves a 10-mile (16km) section along the River Nene. 'Spokes' of the route on both sides of the river link with the outer rim of the Millennium Green Wheel Project. A new bridge has been built to complete a north-south route across the river, to the east of Peterborough. The route also forms part of the National Cycle Network.

Further information: Stuart McPhee, Peterborough City Council. Tel: 01733 453472

4.13 Promoting public transport and freight on water

Traditionally, waterways have been important routes for carrying passengers and freight. Although this role has diminished, a number of important new schemes are now being developed to make better use of the waterways. When developing water



The Peterborough Millennium Green Wheel Map

The Hampton Loade Ferry is a key link for walkers

bus or water taxi services, it is important that schemes are well linked to existing public transport services and are accessible by bike or foot.

REVITALISED FERRY CROSSING

The Countryside Agency has recently funded a replacement ferry at Hampton Loade on the River Severn in Shropshire, as part of the local Rural Transport Partnership.

The ferry crossing, which has been in continuous use since the 17th century, was originally used by farm and forge workers. In its revitalised state it will serve communities on both sides of the river, as well as tourists. The ferry provides a key link between the Severn Valley Railway, the Severn Valley Country Park, the National Trust's Dudmaston Hall, the new Route 45 cycleway and the Countryside Explorer bus route. The ferry enables tourists to travel between sites and around the area by combinations of boat, bike, bus and foot.

Further information: Mrs Angela Dunn. Tel: 01746 862556

There are already significant amounts of freight travelling by water – with 49 million tonnes of cargo moved on UK inland waterways in 2002 (4 million tones purely within the inland waterway system)[18]. The report, **Planning for Freight on Inland Waterways**, concludes that there is significant potential to increase freight traffic on inland waterways.

Local authorities should address freight issues in their LTPs. Sustainable distribution strategies for rural areas should aim to reduce the impacts of lorries in towns and villages and on country roads, while maintaining access through the use of appropriate measures.

In preparing these strategies, consideration should be given to including local waterways in the freight transport network. The use of Freight Facility Grants is providing new means of developing wharves and other necessary facilities.

The types of canals suitable for freight fall broadly into two categories:

- broad (commercial) navigations and rivers – such as the Aire & Calder navigation in Yorkshire, the Caledonian Canal in Scotland, the River Trent, the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, the Thames and others. They are used for carrying dry bulk, such as minerals or grain, liquid goods, waste and increasingly for abnormal indivisible loads. They are particularly important for the movement of aggregates and petrochemicals. Many of these routes are already extensively used by seagoing vessels to access the inland waterways from estuaries and by specialised barges, but there is considerable scope for greater use

The **West Yorkshire LTP** sets the goal to 'take heavy lorries off motorways – put freight on rail or canal'. It includes a range of mechanisms to deliver this, including: safeguarding land for future rail and water freight initiatives; identifying commercial waterways and related infrastructure that could form the basis for developing intermodal facilities and inland ports; and producing a handbook to clarify the process of obtaining information and guidance to transfer freight from road to rail or waterway[19].

Further information: www.wakefield.gov.uk

- those parts of the canal network which are sufficiently wide and which contain substantial stretches which are lock-free or with few locks, for example the Grand Union Canal. These types of canals may be particularly suitable for the movement of aggregates and for waste and recycling materials from central urban to urban fringe areas. There are a number of pilot projects in development looking to exploit such potential.

WASTE ON WATER

British Waterways is working with East Dunbartonshire Council at Twechar in Scotland on the development of a canal-side electrical goods reprocessing plant. Located on the Forth & Clyde Canal, the plant will receive electrical waste from both Edinburgh and Glasgow by barge.

British Waterways is also working with Groundwork in Birmingham to develop a brownfield site adjacent to the canal as a location for processing waste and recyclable material and transporting it by water.

Further information: tom.chaplin@britishwaterways.gov.uk

In addition, these canals and the narrow canals such as the Oxford Canal and the Shropshire Union Canal are home to a number of smaller operators working in niche markets such as small scale carrying of solid fuel to boaters and canalside properties. Scope for freight on the narrow canals is limited due to the dimensions of boats able to use them and the frequency and numbers of locks.

4.2 WATERWAYS AS A DESTINATION

British Waterways estimates that its network receives over 400 million visits a year and it aims to increase this figure. The development of waterways, and access improvements along them, therefore requires action to promote sustainable travel and to reduce unnecessary congestion and traffic.

4.21 Development alongside waterways

Proposals to develop waterside locations throw up issues similar to those raised by development in other areas. In general, it is important that new development respects the character of the waterway corridor and is sympathetic in its design.

In terms of transport, the policies established in **Planning Policy Guidance note 13: Transport** will be particularly relevant. For major new developments at waterside locations (such as offices, marinas, pubs or leisure attractions) efforts should be made to ensure that development is:

- well integrated with existing development, and located in areas that are easily accessible by public transport, bike and foot. Walking and cycling routes and public transport may need improvement as a requirement of planning permission
- minimal in its car parking provision and accompanied by public transport improvements
- accompanied by travel plans, to encourage employers and employees to arrive at work by sustainable transport

Ferries can be promoted and used as a part of rural transport networks

4.22 Accessing the waterside

In addition to the flow of movement along the waterway corridor, sustainable access to the waterside can become an issue. Where public transport options and walking and cycling access are limited, congestion can result from increased numbers of people arriving by car. For example, in Cornwall there is talk of the 'Camel Trail effect': traffic and congestion problems caused by walkers and cyclists using their cars to reach the trail (see section 5.12).

These problems can be addressed by the development of Visitor Travel Plans (VTPs) for key sites. VTPs are site specific but generally address four key areas:

- **promotional initiatives** to raise awareness of alternatives and to develop cost incentives for car-free visits
- **access initiatives** to make it easier to reach the attraction by public transport, walking or cycling
- **facilities initiatives** to ensure that the site meets the needs of those arriving by sustainable transport
- **car parking management** review, with a view to limiting the overall amount of parking at the site

Detailed advice on developing VTPs can be found in **Tourism Without Traffic: A good practice guide**, Transport 2000. Many such initiatives are already taking place on the waterways and some examples are given below.

Promotion and marketing – an interactive website to promote better use of the Oxford Canal between Oxford and Coventry has been developed by British Waterways, Rugby Borough Council and Cherwell District Council. **wwwyourOWNtowpath.com** offers information about facilities along the length of the canal. The canal is broken down into sections, and for each section information about accommodation, facilities, public transport and local circular walks is given.

Access initiatives – The Kennet and Avon Rural Transport Partnership is examining the feasibility of extending the route of the Wiltshire Wiggly Bus to provide access for walkers to the Kennet and Avon Canal. This will involve collecting walkers from set departure points, such as Devizes, and taking them further along the canal, from where they can walk back to the original set-off point. There is considerable potential to link with railway stations. As an added bonus, there is work taking place to see if pubs along the route will offer discounts to Wiggly Bus ticket holders!

Facilities initiatives – as a means of improving access from existing public transport services to the waterway, British Waterways upgraded the towpath on the Trent and Mersey Canal and improved access to Barlaston railway station. Together these now provide an additional means of access to the Wedgwood China factory, a popular nearby tourist destination.

Car parking management – Greenway in Devon is Agatha Christie's former garden and a National Trust property. With overall car visitor numbers limited by a Section 106 agreement, the property can only be visited by car by pre-booking. However, Greenway can also be reached by ferry from the River Dart, or alternatively using local bus services. The property received 20,000 visitors in its first year, and 62 per cent arrived by ferry, bike, bus, or foot.

4.3 KEY ISSUES IN DEVELOPING PROJECTS

When developing waterway projects, there are a number of important issues which need to be considered. These are:

- resolving issues of shared use
- ensuring the safety of users
- establishing ownership and rights of way
- promoting access for people with disabilities
- achieving good design and using public art
- conserving nature and enhancing rural character
- ensuring good consultation

4.31 Resolving issues of shared use

Many routes along rivers and canals are suitable for shared use by walkers, cyclists and occasionally horse riders. Shared use has the benefit of enabling more people to enjoy such routes, but it also has the potential to create conflict between users. The Department for Transport provides advice on shared use in its Local Transport Note, Adjacent and Shared Use Facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists (see **www.dft.gov.uk**).

When developing new projects, local authorities and others should be aware of the policies of British Waterways and others in relation to creating access to waterways (see Table 5 on p. 28). It is clear that a wide range of views exist on the appropriate level of access to waterways. Early consultation with all interested parties will be crucial to resolving differing opinions. This should include key organisations, such as the Inland Waterways Association and user groups (see Annex 1).

Table 5: Policies for access to waterways

BRITISH WATERWAYS

'The optimum use of the towing path as a shared surface for walking, recreational cycling, angling and mooring should be promoted within the constraints of safety and sustainability.'

'British Waterways will consider proposals where the likely level of use will not cause hazards or conflict with other users.'[20]

THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

'The Environment Agency will promote sustainable increased access where it will not adversely impact on existing uses and users, or the economic and conservation value of the site, and associated area, now or in the future. Subject to resources, we will encourage access where managed solutions can be found to remove adverse impacts.' [21]

THE COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

'The Countryside Agency aims to help everyone, wherever they live and whatever their background, to enjoy the countryside and share in this priceless national asset.' [22]

THE ASSOCIATION OF INLAND NAVIGATION AUTHORITIES

'AINA aims to optimise the use of the inland waterways as a shared, sustainable resource for a variety of leisure and recreation activities.'

'AINA aims to provide good public access consistent with safety and environmental constraints.'

In considering the different types of users on a route, a simple hierarchy can be drawn up reflecting the demands placed on the trail and the scale of potential intrusion caused by different users:

1. Pedestrians
2. Cyclists
3. Horse riders

There are some trails, such as South Downs Way, where all users are welcome and different user types co-exist well. On other trails this may not be appropriate; British Waterways does not allow horse riding on towpaths as a general rule.

The extent to which a route is improved and made accessible to all users will vary depending on the geography, financing and overall aim of the project. However, maintaining some routes in a rural state (ie with a bumpy grass surface) and introducing stiles and kissing gates are ways of discouraging multi-use, where this would be inappropriate. However, there is a cost: such measures make a route much less accessible for people with disabilities.

Where multi-user routes are created, speed limits for cyclists can be introduced to reduce the perception of danger by those on foot. Similarly, signs asking users to respect the rights of access of others can be useful for encouraging cooperation.

The Environment Agency, through legal agreements with Sustrans, has created a permissive cycleway along the Thames towpath in its ownership. As a part of these agreements an 8mph speed limit for cyclists has been introduced and notices have been erected indicating that cyclists must give way to walkers.

Further information: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

A further step is to create parallel corridor routes so that different users do not directly share the same path. On the River Parrett Trail, for example, a cycle route parallel to the original corridor has been created between Langport and Bridgwater. There are plans to extend this further and to introduce other parallel routes for horse riders. It is worth noting that many canals and other navigations historically had only one towpath. Finding alternative parallel routes (such as on the opposite bank) is not always easy or possible.

Nevertheless, it is important not to overestimate the problems caused by shared use. Research for the Countryside Agency, using innovative data collection methodology, has contradicted earlier anecdotal evidence about shared use. It finds that: 'Conflict is very infrequent, is generally slight and is mainly concerned with intrusion. Conflict, where it occurs, can be caused by people (such as the behaviour of others) or the environment (such as inadequate maintenance of the route)'[23].

A further study[24] concluded that where conflict does occur it seems to be exacerbated in narrow corridors without space to move aside. This is an important message for those developing waterway routes, which are often space-constrained. It appears that when the width of a route is less than 2 metres on a shared route, there is insufficient room for cyclists travelling at a normal speed to pass each other safely.

The research recommends that route owners and managers should work with user groups to develop codes of conduct for such routes, and that these should be shown on information panels at all access points to the route. British Waterways has developed codes of conduct for all users of its towpath network, and cyclists need to have a permit, which is available free of charge.

4.32 Ensuring the safety of users

Creating schemes which are safe to use should be a top priority for project developers. Waterway projects, like other schemes, need to consider the safety of users, both in terms of safety from accidents (for example falling into a canal) and also personal security (safety from crime and anti-social behaviour).

British Waterways encourages personal safety on canals both through responsible behaviour and through a number of codes of conduct which aim to develop consideration for other waterway users. Educational initiatives, such as Wild Over Waterways, also promote awareness of personal safety issues amongst younger children. Safety signage is provided where necessary, but in general towpath railings or barriers to the immediate canal-side are not deemed necessary.

In 2000, British Waterways and the Metropolitan Police published **Under Lock and Quay**, which promotes the need for safety and crime prevention measures alongside London's canals. The guide, which has wider relevance, considers different types of users, including walkers, cyclists, commuters, anglers and boaters. It examines their different needs as canal users, and offers solutions to the issues and potential problems which it identifies.

Specific guidance includes the need for good quality design adjacent to the waterside. Action can be taken to 'design out' danger, for example by providing:

- barriers and boundary treatments
- improved pedestrian surfacing
- appropriate lighting on some paths
- easy access points – to reduce the feeling of being trapped
- avoiding the use of tunnels and underpasses

Management and ongoing maintenance are key issues to be addressed if the waterside network is to be further developed to provide safe and sustainable routes.

Such actions to make waterside routes more accessible and attractive will encourage more people to use them. The resulting busier 'feel' can have the positive effect of reducing perceptions of danger, thus encouraging even greater use.

British Waterways, the Environment Agency, the National Trust, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and others have jointly endorsed a guidance document entitled **Visitor Safety in the Countryside**. While not specific to inland waterways, it offers guidance for organisations which manage or encourage informal recreation. Fundamental principles include the need to:

- take account of conservation objectives
- avoid compromising people's sense of freedom and adventure
- avoid restrictions on access
- ensure, as far as possible, that all risks are taken voluntarily

The guidance stresses the need for a balance between user self-reliance and management intervention, linked to the preparation of visitor safety plans.

4.33 Establishing ownership and rights of way

Determining who is responsible for the land adjacent to a river or canal can often be a complicated business. In some cases it will be the navigation authority which has legal responsibility for the adjacent land, but in others it will be private landowners or the local authority. Table 2 (page 10) lists the various organisations with navigation responsibility. A full listing of navigation authorities by waterway is available on British Waterways' website. British Waterways owns all of the towpaths alongside its canals.

This does not mean that all waterside routes are public rights of way. While some are (as shown on the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way), others are permissive paths and are open to the public on permission of the landowner. Most of British Waterways' towpaths have this permissive status and are freely accessible unless operational works require temporary closure. Information on public rights of way can be found at **www.prowgpg.org.uk**

For organisations looking to develop waterway projects, it will often be necessary to work closely with a range of organisations to agree legal rights of access. For example to assist Sustrans in developing the NCN, British Waterways has undertaken design audits and produced a guidance document on development, design and construction of cycleways.

In Scotland the Seagull Trust operates canal boats specifically catering for people with disabilities

New steps and ramp to access the Grand Union Canal

Similarly, the Environment Agency and Sustrans have prepared a memorandum of understanding and a joint operational note for the development of new routes on the NCN[25]. They have also drawn up a model licence agreement for agreeing rights of access, to help speed the process of development.
An example of this cooperative approach is the revised Sustrans cycle route from Eton northwards to the Colne Valley; the Environment Agency's new Thames Flood Relief Channel and paths around Slough form the basis of the revised route.

4.34 Promoting access for people with disabilities

Twelve million people in the UK have some form of disability[26] and there is a need to improve access for people with disabilities in all areas. Some waterside routes, such as towpaths, are particularly suitable for treatment to improve accessibility. Towpaths are often fairly wide and flat, making them very suitable for upgrading for wheelchairs and pushchairs.

The Waterways Access for All initiative was a joint programme by British Waterways and the Fieldfare Trust. It aimed to improve access to the waterways for people with disabilities by piloting new ideas and concepts. As a result, British Waterways is now reviewing its access policy for people with disabilities, taking into account national initiatives such as the BT Countryside for All standards.

At **Ratho**, in Edinburgh's rural hinterland, British Waterways has developed a scheme to make it easier for people with disabilities to visit and enjoy the canal. Development work included creating an easily accessible towpath, a car park, specially designed picnic areas, new resting places and a sensory hedge. An interpretation plan was produced to provide a strategic overview to help prioritise funding and implementation.

In addition, the Seagull Trust operates boats from Ratho catering for people with disabilities. The initiatives at Ratho are now providing a focus for visitors on the recently restored Union Canal, and are a good example of the way in which restoration and development can support new leisure and tourism projects.

Further information: Helen Rowbotham, British Waterways. Tel: 01324 677807

The amount of work needed to upgrade a route generally depends on the number of different user types being catered for. In some instances it is not appropriate to upgrade waterside routes, because the scale of necessary works would degrade the rural character of the waterway.

In each case, a careful assessment of the waterway corridor is required. This should consider its landscape setting, heritage importance and ecological value to ensure that projects are compatible with the wider aims of conserving the waterway.

Improvements to towpath access points will help to encourage a wider range of users

4.35 Achieving good design and using public art

Rivers and canals are rich in architectural and historical value. British Waterways' estate alone contains 130 scheduled Ancient Monuments and some 2800 listed structures – second only in number to those managed by the National Trust[27]. Moreover, the waterside buildings and wider landscape are important components of the fabric of the historic waterway.

Great care is needed in the design and implementation of projects in the waterway corridor. British Waterways has produced a checklist for defining and analysing waterway character which includes consideration of issues such as:

- the historical development of the waterway
- the historical and current use of waterside land and buildings
- the waterway topography
- the waterway infrastructure
- the visual waterway envelope[28]

Projects which are designed to reflect the local waterway character and respect the architectural integrity of the area are more likely to win public support and attract funding.

Aerial view of Stourport Basins and the River Severn, illustrating the need for an agreed overall strategy to link the town to its historic watersides

Waterway projects offer the chance to enhance an area through the provision of public art. This can directly increase the pleasure people experience in using a route. It can also help enrich understanding of local geography, history and culture. In addition, there is some evidence to show that making places more attractive and creating the impression that they are cared for reduces vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Stourport-on-Severn lies at the junction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and the River Severn. It is currently undertaking market town improvement initiatives.

Environmental enhancements are planned to link the town centre more closely to the canal basins, which are visually separated from the attractive Georgian streets of the town.

British Waterways, with partners, is planning major enhancements including improved public routes, new signage, better links to riverside boat trips, etc. This work involves the development of a number of design principles aimed at conserving and enhancing the historical character of the area. These include:

- use of appropriate materials
- consistency in design and construction
- historical research to guide design and implementation
- new signage and interpretation

Further information: Chris Bailey, British Waterways. Tel: 01827 252000

The range of historic features at Stourport will be improved using consistent and appropriate materials to enhance the character of the area

Sculptures have been placed alongside the Parrett Trail in Somerset to enhance the visitor experience

ART AND WATER

Coventry has developed a 5mile (9km) art and heritage trail from Hawkesbury Junction on the Coventry Canal into the city centre. Support came from Arts Lottery funding and a partnership between British Waterways, Coventry City Council, Groundwork Coventry, West Midlands Arts and representatives from local industry.

The award-winning trail has been described as Britain's longest outdoor art gallery and incorporates 39 works of art by 31 artists. Many of these pieces have been designed to be scrambled over and sat upon – as well as to be admired and talked about. Each one has a different story behind it. City Council rangers now arrange guided walks and educational events. In addition the Coventry Greenway follows part of the route, enabling the works of art to be enjoyed by cyclists as well.

Further information: Roger Butler, British Waterways.
Tel: 01926 626 139

4.36 Conserving nature and enhancing rural character

Rivers and canals are important habitats for wildlife. Even city centre waterways can host populations of water voles, swans, kingfishers, newts, and invertebrates. English Nature and the local Wildlife Trust (see Annex 1) can provide information on key sites for nature conservation and advice on project implementation.

Ecological surveys should be carried out at an early stage in project development to identify the potential impacts on fauna and flora. Whilst this may sometimes be necessary as part of a formal Environmental Impact Assessment, such work should be considered as best practice no matter what the scale or complexity of the project.

WORKING WITH WILDLIFE

The West Sedgemoor section of the **River Parrett Trail** in Somerset includes a summer loop away from the river and into the village of Stoke St Gregory via the Willows and Wetlands Visitor Centre. This part of the Trail follows the edge of an internationally important wildlife site and is closed off during the winter to reduce the risk of disturbance to wintering waterfowl which use the area.

During the development of the **Coventry Canal Greenway** care was taken to protect the wildlife in the canal. For example, along a stretch of canal which passes a water vole colony, soft coir rolls have been used to protect the bank instead of sheet metal. The coir allows the voles to burrow through to their homes in the canal bank.

In addition to protecting wildlife, waterway projects should aim to enhance the rural character of the countryside. The Countryside Agency's Countryside Character Initiative is a useful tool in helping to interpret rural character. It includes systematic descriptions of the features and characteristics that make up the landscape, and guidance documents on how to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment.

These tools, together with the requirement of an EA in some cases, can help ensure the sensitive design of projects. It is important that project implementation reflects the rural character of the area and key things to look out for are:

- ensuring the path surfacing is appropriate to the area (ie the colour and finish)
- avoiding unnecessary lighting of paths
- sympathetic restoration of adjacent buildings
- ensuring that all benches, cycle racks and other furniture are well designed and in keeping with the area
- avoiding intrusive signs and advertising

4.37 Design and siting on floodplains

The Environment Agency has raised concerns that flood banks and sea walls are often considered as ideal routes for new cycle paths. From a sustainability point of view this is not always the best option. In many cases the agency is looking to retreat these defences, to reduce flood risk and restore functional floodplains.

Project developers should be aware of this issue and discuss route options with the Agency. In some cases it may be preferable to create routes along the edge of floodplains rather than on top of flood defences.

Canals and rivers are important habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna

4.38 Ensuring good consultation

Consultation is the key to successful projects and waterways projects are no exception. It is also a key requirement for LTPs. As can be seen from the case studies in section 5, most successful projects are the result of a winning partnership of organisations and good communication with local people.

The linear nature of waterway corridors makes widespread consultation particularly important, since projects are likely to affect more than one administrative area and the perceived territory of several organisations. It is therefore recommended that project developers consult widely and early on in the preparation of the project strategy. Key groups to consider contacting include:

- neighbouring local authorities
- the navigation authority (British Waterways, Environment Agency or other)
- canal trusts
- local walking, cycling and riding groups (eg Ramblers, Sustrans, the British Horse Society and the Cyclists Touring Club)
- angling clubs and other user groups
- Rural Transport Partnerships in the area
- local waterway businesses

In addition to key groups, project developers should aim to involve the wider public. For example at Wolverton near Milton Keynes, a range of techniques was used to engage the public in the development of a 'vision' for the town.

In the following section, we look at how these and other issues have been resolved in a number of projects around the country.

SECTION FIVE

This section looks in detail at a selection of successful rural waterway projects from around the country.

This section reviews a range of projects which are being developed around the country. All focus - at least to some degree - on making use of the waterway corridor.

Some of the projects reviewed are well-established schemes where the benefits are clear to see. Others are still in their infancy, but are inspirational in their project development work and potential. Here too, you will find problems that have arisen during project development and implementation. It is from such set backs – and endeavours to overcome them – that we can build experience for the future.

Not all of the schemes presented here have been funded or brought forward through the LTP system. Most schemes, however, have the potential to contribute to the broader goals of LTPs and rural strategies. This demonstrates the argument for integrating such projects more fully into future LTPs.

The projects are examined in a series of case studies; the majority are detailed, but some are briefer reviews. The case studies are presented under seven theme headings.

CASE STUDY AREAS

The inland waterways network offers great scope for leisure, recreation and sustainable travel

5.1 PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LEISURE JOURNEYS

5.11 The Trans Pennine Trail

The Trans Pennine Trail is a long-distance walking, cycling and horseriding trail. It opened in September 2001 and stretches from Liverpool to Hull. A quarter of the UK population live within 20 miles of the route, but it also passes through beautiful rural terrain, including the Peak District National Park, the Mersey Forest and the South Yorkshire Forest.

Good practice

- strong partnership working between local authorities
- detailed monitoring of use
- project reflected in LTPs

Organisations involved

a partnership of 26 local authorities across the north of England, with a central office in Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

The scheme

The Trans Pennine Trail (TPT) is the first purpose-built long-distance multi-user trail in the country. It is a coast-to-coast route linking Southport (and Liverpool), on the Irish Sea, to the town of Hornsea (and Hull), on the North Sea. It also includes a north-south route from Leeds to Chesterfield and a link to York. In total there is 345 miles (555km) of trail available, which is accessible by walkers, cyclists, and (for large parts) by horse riders. In addition, long stretches of the trail are suitable for people with disabilities and for family recreation.

For a total of 58 miles (93km) the route follows canals and rivers. These include the Aire and Calder navigation, the Chesterfield, the Leeds-Liverpool and the St Helen's Canals, the Rivers Dearne and Don and many more. On the Selby Canal, for example, British Waterways worked on behalf of the local authority to help fund, design and implement a section of towpath trail. This links the town centre canal to the surrounding countryside.

In addition to its use for long-distance recreation the TPT has local value to residents. They use it to walk or cycle to school and work, for jogging and dog walking, and as a 'green' way to travel from urban centres to the countryside.

Who was involved?

The project was initiated in 1989 and led to a partnership of 26 local authorities, with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council acting as the lead authority. Following the successful implementation of the project, each local authority maintains responsibility for developing and maintaining the sections of the TPT in its area. All contribute to project funding. The project is coordinated from the TPT office at Barnsley MBC.

Cost

The project cost £30 million in total. National Lottery Millennium Commission funding provided £5.8 million of this. The rest was provided by local authority project partners from a range of sources, including other grant schemes and LTP funds.

Results so far

The trail has proved to be popular, with usage steadily increasing. Monitoring results show that most users are local. Of those surveyed, 87 per cent claimed that they were regular users of the trail. In addition, 71 per cent of those using the trail had not used a car or any other form of transport to access the trail, which suggests that they live locally.

In addition, surveys have shown that although the route is very popular for leisure use, it is also well used by commuters, schoolchildren and others making daily utility journeys (8.1 per cent of users surveyed[29]).

In terms of particular issues arising on sections of the trail adjacent to rivers and canals, narrow towpaths were cited as a fairly minor problem. Another issue raised is that horse riders, who have access to three-quarters of the route, are not allowed on British Waterways' towpath sections. This creates some discontinuity in the trail. A particular problem – which has wider relevance – is abuse of

certain sections of the route by motor bikers, especially in the Rotherham and Doncaster areas. Action has been taken by local authorities to install access barriers, but with varying degrees of success. Local authorities are also working in partnership with the police to try to target offenders.

Advice for implementation

The success of the project to date is largely attributable to the development of a strong partnership of local authorities across the route. **'The partnership arrangement among the local authorities was the key,'** says Les Ford, TPT Trail Officer. This partnership, initiated as long ago as 1989, ensured that local implementation followed more smoothly. Now, it also provides the context for the ongoing management of the trail.

An understanding of who is using the trail and their needs has been helped by a three-year monitoring programme (2002-2004). Consultants have gathered information from a range of sources enabling a detailed picture of use to be built up. The monitoring has included assessment of: the different types of users, average journey lengths, problems encountered, satisfaction, mode of transport for accessing the trail, average spend and other issues. This information base will help inform the future management of the trail.

Further information: Les Ford, Trans Pennine Trail Officer. Tel: 01226 772574 or transpenninetrail@barnsley.gov.uk

5.12 The Camel Trail – the problems of success

The huge popularity of Cornwall's Camel Trail demonstrates the value of creating new routes for walking, cycling and horse riding. However, it has also created challenges in terms of managing access to the route, in order to relieve traffic congestion in the surrounding area.

Good practice

- cooperation between local authorities and local business
- managing numbers on the trail
- linking leisure cycling with cycling promotion and cycling for health

Organisations involved

Cornwall County Council, North Cornwall District Council, the Forestry Commission, English Nature, the Environment Agency and others.

The scheme

The Camel Trail is a long-established multi-user route that runs along the Camel River Estuary, in Cornwall, following a disused steam railway track. Its 14 miles (22km) link the three small towns of Padstow, Wadebridge and Bodmin. There are limited local bus services; and Bodmin Parkway station – more than 5 miles from one end of the route – is not yet linked to the trail by a designated cycle route. The trail is, though, part of the NCN linking Land's End to Bristol.

Although designated a multi-user trail, it has become primarily a cycle route. Figures for 1992 showed that more than 90 per cent of people using the trail cycled, and only 7.2 per cent walked. A well thought-out code of conduct reminds people on bikes to respect those who are walking.

Because of its scenic location and flat terrain it is popular with family groups and people who do not usually cycle. A 2002 Sustrans survey showed that 54 per cent of those interviewed described themselves as novice cyclists. The trail's popularity has soared, with a 94 per cent increase in use between 1998 and 2002. Approximately half a million people use the trail each year and since many people, both locals and tourists, drive there this has increased car journeys to the area.

The trail is also used by local people for dog walking and recreation, while some 3 per cent of cycle trips are commuter journeys between the towns.

Who is involved?

The Trail is managed by a partnership group which includes all the county, district, parish and town councils. In addition, it includes representatives from the local chambers of commerce and from national organisations such as English Nature, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission. The project is coordinated by Cornwall County Council and North Cornwall District Council.

The Camel Trail encourages people to cycle to local attractions

Cost

A large chunk of revenue funding is raised from licensing the hire of bikes. This is possible because it is a permissive route and not a right of way. Bike hire companies pay a license fee for each bike amounting to £65 per annum. In total, this raises around £45,000 each year. This money contributes directly to a site ranger's salary and maintenance of the trail.

The scheme also controls, to some extent, numbers of bikes on the trail, with a total of 750 licences granted across the area. Licenses are granted for a five-year period, ensuring that standards are maintained by the hire companies.

Some 44 local jobs can be directly attributed to an increase in visitor spend along the trail.

Results so far

The trail has almost become a victim of its own success, sucking in large numbers of visitors of whom 60 per cent arrive by car. The Cycling Officer at Cornwall County Council, Rebecca Jackson, is now actively promoting other trails as cycle routes in an effort to take the heat off the Camel Trail. There will soon be signs at strategic places along the trail suggesting other places to go for a bike ride.

The council is also improving links with both public transport and other cycle routes, in order to increase the number of people arriving by sustainable transport. It has been experimenting with bike buses. Currently, the only bus which carries bikes to the trail is the number 55 – and it has space for just two. However, there are plans to increase the capacity to carry bikes across the area. According to Jackson, the cycle route to Bodmin Parkway station will eventually be linked into the trail making it easier for people to arrive by train and bike. Local hire companies are increasingly offering to deliver bikes to hotels, stations and other start points, enabling more people to access the trail without a car.

The trail is also being used to promote cycling as a healthy activity. A Health Action Zone Pedal Back the Years project prescribes cycling for people who need to be more active. The local cycle hire companies provide both bikes and escorts for these health-related rides, providing welcome work during the off season. Similarly, school cycling activities are promoted along the trail, with the council waiving the hire fee for bikes used for these purposes.

Advice for implementation

The trail has been hugely successful in providing a safe and pleasant route for people to try out cycling and walking. Cornwall County Council deals with a vast influx of tourists throughout the year. Measures are now being put in place to make access to the Camel Trail easier by bus, train and bike. Linking trails to other transport networks is clearly an essential part of any sustainability strategy.

The partnership between local business and the local authorities, both for promoting the trail and providing facilities, has been very successful. The bike hirers contribute directly to the upkeep of the trail, while schemes such as the Pedal Back the Years initiative provide additional revenue for these businesses during quiet periods. Using an easy-to-cycle trail as a resource for health and education initiatives can help promote cycling and walking more generally across an area. This also ensures that a route is used throughout the year, not just during the holiday season.

Further information: Rachel Young, Countryside Officer (Site and Trails). Tel: 01579 370030 or ryoung@cornwall.gov.uk

5.2 MANAGING ACCESS TO WATERWAYS

5.21 The Kennet and Avon Canal – managing access along the canal

Restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal has been successful in attracting new visitors. Ensuring that everybody can enjoy the canal, whether for a quiet rural walk, an invigorating cycle ride, or to explore its industrial heritage, is a challenge. Persuading more visitors to get there without using a car is proving an even bigger one!

Good Practice

- building on existing local facilities
- providing comprehensive information about the whole canal
- working to enhance the special characteristics of each area

Organisations involved

The Kennet and Avon Canal Rural Transport Partnership (which includes all seven local authorities through which it passes), the Countryside Agency, British Waterways, the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust and the Kennet and Avon Association of Canal Enterprises.

The scheme

The Kennet and Avon Canal stretches from Bristol to Reading. It passes through scenic Cotswold villages, the historic town of Bath, quiet rural stretches and important historical sites, such as the imposing flight of 29 locks at Caen Hill just outside Devizes. In 1997, the Canal Trust received £29.24 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the regeneration of the canal. The regeneration has been a success, both in terms of increasing economic activity along the canal and in promoting leisure and tourism visits. Some 6.7 million people visit the canal each year.

The problems, as well as the benefits, from attracting large numbers of canal visitors were recognised from the start; British Waterways was required by the Heritage Lottery Fund to produce a Public Transport and Visitor Management Strategy. This proposed actions to encourage visitors to arrive by public transport, bike and foot, and to protect the distinct character of the canal along its length.

The Kennet and Avon Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) was established in November 2003. Building on the previous visitor strategy, its aim is to 'increase the percentage of visitors either accessing the canal by means other than personal car, or using some form of sustainable transport during their visit.'

The RTP officer, Oliver Giles, is clear that where he can make the biggest difference quickly is 'in the production of information about public transport options along the canal for the general public.' He points out that transport links along most of the canal are not bad. There are connecting train stations between Reading and Newbury, while bus links along the western stretch of the canal are good. The problem is that the canal passes through so many county boundaries and transport operators' areas, so it is not easy for people to find out how to make their journey. He stresses the importance of putting all the public transport information on one piece of paper.

Where there are gaps in services, the RTP works with and builds on existing services. For example, it is working with Wiltshire County Council to fund a summer Sunday shuttle service between Bradford-on-Avon and Devizes, and Devizes and Pewsey. This will help to draw people away from a very busy section of the canal, and make it possible to get to Devizes on a Sunday without using a car.

Giles is also keen to maximise the potential of the Wiltshire Wiggly Bus, based in Pewsey. This demand-responsive service can already drop people off at points along the canal. But knowing where to leave the canal to meet the bus can be problematic. Simple bus stops will be put up so visitors know where to wait. Pubs along the route will have direct phone lines to the service and waiting areas for passengers.

Making sure that visitors know what to expect along each section of the canal is another important part of the access strategy. For example, a promotional map has been produced by the RTP showing clearly which stretches of the towpath are part of a Sustrans route. While cycling is allowed on other stretches, it warns that these may be 'narrow, muddy and uneven' and that cyclists should take care.

The rural nature of the Kennet and Avon Canal has been carefully preserved and managed

The towpath is suitable for multi-use activity: Caen Hill lock flight at Devizes

Costs

The RTP has £50,000 per annum for two years to spend on projects. A further £10,000 per annum is available from a delegated fund. Projects like supporting the Sunday service from Bradford-on-Avon are viewed as good value; twelve Sundays costs £3,500 – for two buses with drivers. Extra money is being spent on marketing the service. Producing and distributing material to promote existing transport links will take up much of the remaining funding.

Results so far

The RTP programme is still in its early stages. Monitoring may be difficult since meters along the canal count the numbers of people cycling and walking, but do not show how they reached the canal in the first place. Similarly, people using either the extended Sunday service or the Wiggly Bus may not be visiting the canal. Telephone surveys are planned to establish a more accurate picture.

The cycle route is already popular, both for recreational use and commuting. However, on the Wiltshire section there is some conflict between keeping the rural character of the canal between Devizes and Pewsey, and using it as part of a proposed Access for All trail in Pewsey. The current solution is to route cyclists away from the canal and onto the network of Quiet Lanes around Pewsey.

Further information: Oliver Giles, Kennet and Avon Canal Rural Transport Partnership Officer. Tel: 01452 318000 or oliver.giles@britishwaterways.co.uk

5.22 The Broads – birds by bus, boat and train

The Widen the Choice Rural Transport Partnership is a joint project in the east of England between the National Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Countryside Agency. It promotes sustainable access to properties and reserves across the region.

In the ecologically sensitive Broads National Park, a number of initiatives have been taken to encourage access to nature reserves by public transport and boat. A good example is the Birds by Boat leaflet, which encourages boating holidaymakers to access some of the nature reserves using their boats. The leaflet provides details of moorings, facilities and the highlights of the reserves.

Further information: Chris Wood, Transport Partnership Officer for the RSPB, and the National Trust in the east of England. Tel: 01603 697515 or chris.wood@rspb.org.uk

5.3 USING THE WATERWAYS FOR FREIGHT

5.31 Lea quarry – sand and gravel go by barge

A sand and gravel quarry at Lea, near Denham in Middlesex, sets new environmental standards for freight transport. Extracted material from the quarry goes directly to the processing plant by barge, along the Grand Union Canal.

Good Practice

- choice of best practicable environmental option
- uses water transport as an alternative to road transport
- partnership of different organisations

Organisations involved:

British Waterways London, Harleyford Aggregates and Hanson Aggregates.

The Scheme

Harleyford Aggregates' sand and gravel quarry at Lea has been supplying construction materials to local markets for many years. A new system for transporting some of the materials by barge came into operation in 2003, following special arrangements for transporting the extracted material. The quarry site is located half a mile from the Grand Union Canal. As an alternative to taking aggregates out by lorry on local roads, a conveyor and loading system were built to carry the material directly from the quarry to barges on the canal. Two specially commissioned barges were built for the project. They make a 5-mile journey down the canal to the Hanson Aggregates depot at West Drayton, where the material is used to make pre-mix concrete and asphalt. A new jetty was constructed at the depot to receive shipments.

Good publicity lets people choose how they travel

The scheme is saving around 6,500 lorry journeys every year. The quarry is set to supply Hanson for seven years with a total of 450,000 tonnes of sand and gravel. Over this period, the equivalent of 45,000 lorry movements will be avoided by the shipment of aggregates by barge.

Who was involved?

Harleyford Aggregates, which operates Lea quarry, signed a contract with British Waterways London and Hanson Aggregates to develop the transfer of some its output by barge. British Waterways played a key role in securing funding for the scheme, and Hanson Aggregates agreed a supply contract to receive the material at its processing plant. Specialist contractor, Land and Water Services Ltd, offered the scheme a turnkey solution, designing and building the innovative new vessels, installing the infrastructure and operating the boats for the seven-year contract period.

Cost

The decision to take out aggregates by barge significantly increased costs. The main cost elements were the conveyor, the wharves and the barges. Grant funding of £462,000 was secured to help cover these additional costs. This was made up of a Freight Facility Grant of £222,000 (which funded around 90 per cent of the conveyor) and a £240,000 grant from the London Waterway Partnership (funded from the Single Regeneration Budget), which helped with wharf construction and other costs.

Results so far

The scheme came into operation in July 2003 and is now running smoothly. There were teething problems ensuring that a steady supply of material was delivered from the quarry to Hanson's, as transport by barge is much slower than by road. However, this has now been solved and the scheme is seen as a success.

In addition, Hanson's depot has acquired a new wharf, which could be used to receive shipments from other quarries by canal in the future.

Advice for implementation

The partnership between British Waterways and the businesses enabled significant grant assistance to be secured for the project. Without this it is unlikely that the project would have been economically feasible. As David Weeks of Hanson Aggregates puts it: 'The availability of grant assistance for this scheme was a key driver – without it the finances just didn't stack up.'

The availability of grant funding enabled the project partners to pursue the best environmental option. Transport of quarry material by barge is not a requirement of Harleyford's planning permission, but it offered many environmental advantages over road transport. A particular benefit to the local community is the reduced nuisance from heavy-lorry traffic.

Further information: Tom Chaplin, British Waterways. Tel: 07715 700254 or tom.chaplin@britishwaterways.co.uk

5.32 Hackney's waste on water

A novel pilot scheme is in operation involving the movement of domestic waste by barge for the London Borough of Hackney. Waste from a specially designed collection vehicle is transferred direct to a barge, which then carries it up the River Lee Navigation to the disposal plant at Edmonton.

Good practice

- takes lorries off busy roads
- innovative waste vehicle
- enables renewed use of the river

Organisations involved

Intermodal Solutions Ltd, Wood, Hall and Heward Ltd (barge operations), and British Waterways.

The scheme

A pilot scheme is in operation for the London Borough of Hackney transporting waste, in enclosed skip and hook-lift containers, by barge along the River Lee Navigation.

The project differs from previous attempts to transport waste by water in that containers containing the waste are loaded and unloaded directly onto the barge from the waste collection vehicle. Previous attempts have always relied on expensive quayside transfer stations and cranes, the cost of which has made water transport uncompetitive. A concrete hard-standing constitutes the entire quayside infrastructure required by the project system.

The pilot scheme has involved the introduction of one specialised waste collection vehicle operating in Hackney. This collects waste from around the borough in the normal way. The vehicle then takes the waste to the canal-side for direct transfer onto the barge. Once the vehicle has discharged its load it can go straight back to work collecting rubbish, thereby avoiding a long drive to the waste disposal plant.

The purpose-built barge has a special lifting deck in the hold. This enables the loaded containers to be lowered down into the hold to give adequate headroom for bridges. The barge travels the 6 miles (9km) to the disposal plant at Edmonton on the River Lee Navigation. Fortunately, the Edmonton waste-to-energy plant is directly adjacent to the canal, so transfer of waste from barge to plant is straightforward.

Currently, all the other Hackney waste collection vehicles travel by road to the disposal plant in Edmonton, clocking up an estimated 165,000 vehicle miles (264,000km) per annum.

Who was involved

The pilot scheme has been developed by Intermodal Solutions, and is being run in conjunction with Hackney Council. Bywaters Ltd has assisted with the provision of a hook-lift vehicle, and OMB (UK) Ltd and Haller GmbH have provided the demountable-container collection vehicle. In addition, British Waterways has provided support for the project and some funding.

Cost

The cost of the pilot scheme is estimated at £355,000. This was covered in part by grant support from the Single Regeneration Budget (£50,000) and a Freight Facilities Grant (£236,000). Hackney Borough Council paid part of the hire costs of the waste collection vehicle.

Results so far

The pilot scheme initially ran for three months in 2003. It was successful apart from some minor design problems with the waste collection vehicle. The trial then restarted in July 2004 using a rear-loading collection vehicle to replace the side-loading one. All elements involving the transfer of waste onto and off the barge and along the river operated successfully.

Advice for implementation

There are several key factors in the success of this project:

- the location of the waste disposal plant adjacent to the canal makes accessing it by water a sensible choice
- the heavily congested roads in and around Hackney make road transport slow and relatively expensive. It is therefore attractive to find an alternative mode for waste transport. (Similar considerations could apply in rural districts where the road network is poor or where lorry traffic threatens environmentally sensitive areas)
- the innovative waste vehicle design removes the need for costly dockside loading infrastructure and increases the efficiency of the collection operation. This greatly reduces the costs of the scheme

If evidence from the second stage of the trial confirms the success of the new vehicle design, there are likely to be other locations where this approach could be applied. The Hackney approach is particularly attractive as it removes the need for transhipment facilities – which can also be difficult to make acceptable in planning terms – and reduces the overall costs of the project. 'The really crucial element here,' says Nick MacWhirter of Intermodal Solutions, 'is the reduction of the quayside infrastructure necessary to tranship the waste from the vehicle to the barge.'

Further information: Tom Chaplin, British Waterways.
Tel: 07715 700254 or tom.chaplin@britishwaterways.co.uk

Innovative design makes using water transport easier

Hackney's Waste on Water: unloading the barge

Lincoln's riverside path is now a popular route to and from the city centre

5.4 CONNECTING TOWN AND COUNTRY

5.41 Lincoln's riverside path – small improvements can lead to big changes

Small-scale improvements to a riverside path have made it a popular route into the City of Lincoln.

Good practice

- using an overall strategy to effect local change
- upgrading an existing route to make it accessible to everyone
- making sure that people hear about the new route

Organisations involved

Lincoln City Council, Lincolnshire County Council, district councils, the Countryside Agency, East Midlands Development Agency, Sustrans, CycleLincs and others.

The scheme

A muddy stretch of path running alongside the River Witham from Lincoln's city centre to residential areas has been upgraded into an attractive multi-user route, making it ideal for getting to work or to the shops. Running past allotments, fields and open spaces, it is a pleasant way to escape the city's traffic.

The riverside path has been developed as part of Lincoln's wider Greenways strategy, which aims to create a network of traffic-free and quiet routes within an 8-mile (13km) radius of the city. The Greenways strategy is included in Lincolnshire's LTP as part of the Rural Priorities initiative. The strategy helps fulfil many of the LTP's

New footbridges have been provided to link the riverside path over the city's waterways

objectives, such as increasing transport choices, making cycling and walking safer and improving the mobility of people with disabilities.

By following the river, the path creates a direct route parallel to the main road that leads south out of the city, making it quick and simple for commuters. The path has been developed over a six-year period in three phases (the last phase was completed in May 2003). There are plans to further extend the path, as funding and opportunities arise.

Who was involved?

Different partners have worked with Lincoln City Council at various stages. Local communities have been closely consulted through the mechanism of Community Travel Zones, a county council initiative to boost walking and cycling for short journeys. These local consultations have identified where toucan crossings were beneficial, and where to link the path into other networks.

The city council has also worked with Sustrans, which has developed important links into the city from both east and west (along the River Witham and the Fossdyke navigation channel). Making sure that these three routes join together through the city is an important element in future plans.

CycleLincs, the local cycling campaign group, helped with the development of a map of all the routes around the city – included was useful information such as the location of pubs, cafes, play areas and toilets. The maps were distributed at a wide variety of outlets in the city (including libraries and community centres) and at key points along the routes. Age Concern also requested copies for the groups that it works with.

The city and county councils have worked together to develop clear and comprehensive signage along the route, encouraging both long and short journeys. Commuter villages just 3 miles away are mentioned, as are leisure attractions along a 25-mile (40km) circular route which runs into the city centre.

Costs

The three phases developed so far have cost approximately £600,000. Money has been raised from a number of partners, including the East Midlands Development Agency and the Countryside Agency. Money allocated to the Community Travel Zones has also been used where appropriate. For each stage of the project new funding has had to be found. Local business has contributed small amounts.

Results so far

Regular monitoring of the scheme by fixed counters only registers the number of bikes that pass. However, the results are impressive and show remarkable increases at each stage of development. For example when the third phase of the path was opened in May 2003, cycle usage increased by 20 per cent. A manual count in 2003 showed that some 1300 cyclists and pedestrians were using the path each day.

Although there has been no systematic research on this, it is clear that local post delivery staff are now using the route regularly – for bicycle deliveries to outlying areas and for commuting. Five postal workers were found to be using the path one Thursday afternoon in May 2004. One of them described the route as 'the best thing the council has ever done'.

Residents of Washingborough, a village to the west of Lincoln, are delighted with their river route connecting straight into the city. They say there is a noticeable reduction in local road traffic on sunny days, when more people use the path to get to work.

Advice for implementation

Having an overall strategy has enabled the city council to seize local opportunities when they arise. The path has been developed in stages, but with a clear purpose and future plans. According to Project Officer Dave Albans, being able to show potential funders how each section fits together and builds on existing routes to establish a network has made it easier to raise money.

In addition, good design has ensured that the riverside path is accessible to all. There is ample room for passing, making it suitable for novice cyclists; and wheelchair users can access it at all entry points.

Further information: Martin Hollingsworth, Senior Highways Officer, Lincolnshire County Council. Tel: 01522 553102 or martin.hollingsworth@lincolnshire.gov.uk

5.42 The Chesterfield Canal – accessing Derbyshire's Greenways

Restoration of the 46 mile (74km) Chesterfield Canal is part of Derbyshire County Council's successful Greenways strategy; this strategy is an integral part of the current LTP. Over half of the proposed Greenways network in the county has already been completed.

Geraint Coles, the Chesterfield Canal Partnership Development Manager, is developing an access strategy for the Chesterfield Canal towpath, in order to build on this success. Employed by Derbyshire County Council, his brief is to regard the canal as a linear park that should also be well connected to the local transport network. Often the canal provides the only practicable east-west walking and cycling route between neighbouring communities, for example, by passing underneath roads such as the A1(M). Coles works closely with parish councils along the canal to feed their priorities into the county strategy. For example, in Rotherham he is working with the local Footpaths Officer to develop the canal as a useful walking link.

Monitoring in 2003 showed that the towpath is being heavily used. Around 8 per cent of journeys are for commuting, shopping or visiting. Some parts of the path are promoted more heavily than others as part of a deliberate strategy to steer people away from Sites of Special Scientific Interest, where access needs to be managed carefully.

Anna Chapman, Derbyshire's Countryside Officer for Greenways, describes waterside paths as "pieces of the puzzle" that can complete a route. She stresses the importance of having an overall vision, so that you can see where the gaps are and work with partners to fill them.

Further information: Geraint Coles, Chesterfield Canal Partnership Development Manager. Tel: 01246 433 186 or geraint.coles@derbyshire.gov.uk

5.5 ADDRESSING DISABILITIES AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

5.51 Oxford Canal - waterways help boost local services

Lower Heyford in rural Oxfordshire sits on the Oxford Canal. The original village shop had been closed for many years and residents were forced to travel to nearby towns such as Bicester and Steeple Aston to shop. Boaters travelling on the canal also faced difficulties, as there was a long stretch of the canal without easy access to shops.

David Dare decided to expand his existing chandlery business at the canal-side boat yard into a new shop for the village. Following consultation with the local authorities the shop opened in Spring 2004, and now provides a basic range of goods for villagers and boaters alike.

The project has been well received and plans are in train to expand the range of goods available. 'Every day there was some little thing like milk or bread that you needed, and which meant jumping into the car,' explains local resident, Robin Hepworth. 'The new shop is a godsend!'

The key drivers in this project were the lack of existing services in the area, and the increasing demand from boaters using the canal. It is a good example of small-scale waterway development helping to support rural life.

Further information:
enquiries@oxfordshire-narrowboats.co.uk

A simple design makes fishing easier for all

5.52 Access for all paths on the Grand Union Canal, Hertfordshire

Access has been improved for a wide range of users on towpaths of the Grand Union Canal, between Watford and Rickmansworth. This has been achieved by upgrading the paths, installing ramps and interpretation signs, producing a leaflet and linking the towpath to other routes.

Good Practice

- meeting the needs of many
- involving local partners from the very beginning
- identifying 'quick wins' to work on first

Organisations involved

Hertfordshire County Council, Watford Borough Council, Three Rivers District Council, British Waterways, the Countryside Agency, the Community Development Agency for Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Rural Transport Partnership, Groundwork Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire Action on Disability, local anglers, and cycling and community groups.

The Scheme

Two Access for All trails along the Grand Union Canal between Watford and Rickmansworth have been developed with Hertfordshire County Council's Rural Transport Partnership.

The project's primary aim is 'to realise the largely untapped potential of the Grand Union Canal corridor as a recreational, leisure and countryside access facility, as it passes through Watford and the Three Rivers District.' A secondary aim is to improve sustainable transport links in this heavily congested area. The two projects also help fulfil objectives set in the Hertfordshire LTP rural strategy.

Parts of the towpath between Rickmansworth and Watford have been given a firm surface suitable for a range of users, such as anglers wheeling their tackle in trailers and parents pushing youngsters in buggies. Two shorter stretches are also suitable for wheelchair users, with well designed access ramps.

While the intention is to upgrade the whole route, the initial phases have concentrated on sections where it has been easy to install ramps. The rural nature of the paths has been maintained by using a crushed aggregate surface that is both hard-wearing and suitably mud-coloured. In addition, rather than widening the path beyond 2 metres, passing places have been created.

Anglers have been provided with a narrow strip of grass by the water to sit on with their equipment, and simple bays have been installed at regular intervals for wheelchair users to park by the waterside – also enabling them to fish.

The type of surfacing and the location of steep bridges and ramps are all clearly marked on a free map, as are toilets, cafés and the two nearby Underground stations. The towpath links into existing amenities, such as the Ebury Way (part of Sustrans Route 61), a local water sports centre and popular local paths. This has made the canal towpath part of a number of pleasant circular walks, as well as a direct route into Watford and Rickmansworth.

Who was involved?

The scheme has been driven forward by Jacque Grant, Hertfordshire's Rural Transport Partnership Officer. She put together a broad partnership, ensuring that a wide body of interests was consulted at the start. As a result the scheme has become more than just a towpath upgrade, and has been included in wider community initiatives. For example, cycle routes within the West Watford SRB Assisted Area have been connected with the towpath. And Watford Borough Council is putting up street signs to advertise the routes better.

Hertfordshire Action on Disability carried out a disability audit to identify what needed to be done on each section of the towpath. Annabelle Waterfield, their Chief Executive, points out that because towpaths have few gradients they are relatively easy to improve for disabled access.

The new surface makes wheeling a trolley easy work

All the land involved was owned either by British Waterways or by one of the local authorities. As these bodies were all partners in the project there were no problems over access, although licences for the future upkeep of the structures were required.

Costs

The towpath upgrade has cost around £100,000 with a further £150,000 spent on complementary works, including a new ramp and steps to link to the Ebury Way. The money has come from a variety of sources including Hertfordshire's LTP, the Countryside Agency and British Waterways. Add-ons, such as the route links and local signage, have been paid for by the local authorities; while a map advertising the scheme was sponsored and distributed by all the main partners.

Having to negotiate relatively small amounts of money from a large number of partners has been time consuming. However, Alan Prest, the British Waterways official involved, says that by being part of a scheme and helping to pay for it local groups gain a sense of ownership over the towpath.

Results so far

Monitoring was not carried out before the upgrades, so there are no figures for changed levels of use. However, it is clear that the paths are well used, and people questioned along the route were happy with the improvements. One canal boat resident says that she now cycles the 'long way round' to work, because it is so much easier and more pleasant.

Having seen these schemes successfully finished, Grant is keen to improve access on further sections of the canal towpath and to make more links with the local path network.

Advice for implementation

Grant believes that the project has worked because the partnership group had 'clarity of thinking, and set objectives to which they were all very committed.' There was always a larger vision than just a towpath upgrade. And that has made it easy to sell the project to a wide community of interests.
Making sure that groups were consulted early in the process gave them a sense of ownership; this may also have helped to resolve conflicts.

Further information: Jacque Grant, Project Officer, Hertfordshire Rural Transport Partnership.
Tel: 01707 695 511 or jgrant@rtcp.freeuk.com

5.53 River Parrett Trail – access project

The 50mile (80km) River Parrett Trail follows the river from its source in Dorset to its mouth in the Bristol Channel. It also includes sections following the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal (from Fordgate into Bridgwater). Project managers aim to create a showcase set of initiatives to improve access for people with disabilities. As part of this, the project partners have created a three-quarter-mile loop from the main trail, at Ham Hill, which is fully wheelchair accessible. They have also created several fishing platforms along the riverbank for people with disabilities.

In addition, the River Parrett Trail has purchased a bike with a sidecar for disabled passengers, with funding from Wessex Water and Tesco. The bike can currently be used on local roads around the trail at Langport, and along the old railway line to Muchelney. The existing surfacing of the disused line makes the going a little hard at present. Plans are currently in hand to improve the route for the bike.

Further information: Kate Jenkins, Parrett Trail Officer. Tel: 01458 210790 or kate.jenkins@somersetlevels.org.uk

A well designed map helps people plan their day out: an extract from the Fal River Links map

5.6 USING THE WATERWAYS FOR PASSENGER TRANSPORT

5.61 'Park and Float' and other water transport schemes around Falmouth

A combination of four different passenger boat initiatives on the rivers around Falmouth enables visitors to have a day out without their car, easing traffic congestion in the Falmouth and Truro area.

Good Practice

- marketing an area rather than a single service
- working with local business
- implementing an overall strategy

Organisations involved

Cornwall County Council, Carrick District Council, Falmouth Town Council, the National Trust, the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth, English Nature, English Heritage, Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, private ferry operators and others.

The Scheme

Four projects on the rivers and estuary around Falmouth, in Cornwall, are working together to promote travel by water. This builds on the area's tradition of linking small communities by boat, rather than using the long and winding country roads.

The first project is a Park and Float/Ride scheme that operates from the outskirts of Falmouth. It encourages visitors to park their car and use either a ferry or a free bus into the town centre. This helps to take traffic off Falmouth's narrow streets and reduces pressure on the town-centre car parks.

Second is the Fal River Links scheme, a joint marketing initiative by the numerous privately operated ferries that run between Falmouth, Truro and the many scenic attractions in the area. The companies are now working together rather than in competition. A simple London Underground-style map has been produced to show routes, interconnections and links with local buses and trains. The times of boats, buses and trains are also shown, as well as itineraries, rural walks and places to stop and eat. The visitor is given easily accessible information on pleasant days out which don't need a car.

Thirdly, a fast water taxi service also operates on the waterway. Called Aqua Cab, it is bookable by phone. Aqua Cab can reach places not serviced by the ferries and operates until 1am, allowing users to get home by water after a night out.

The fourth project is at Trelissick Gardens, a popular National Trust destination by the river. In August 2004 Trelissick opens a landing stage, allowing visitors to arrive by boat directly from Falmouth or Truro. A new entrance to the gardens will also be opened, enabling boat passengers to enter direct from the landing stage.

While each of the above schemes would on its own have some impact on visitor travel choices, the combined effect of all four is much greater. The message is conveyed that using a boat is an obvious and simple mode of transport in the area.

Who was involved?

Different partners have been involved in each of the projects. The initial concept came from a report commissioned by Cornwall County Council and the National Trust in 1999. This put forward an overall strategy for promoting river travel in the area to relieve congestion due to increasing visitor numbers. The report proposed all four of the above schemes.

The partners in the Park and Float/Ride project were the county council (which obtained the site), the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth, and Falmouth Town Council (which wanted to take visitor traffic off its streets).

Similarly, the National Trust has worked with many partners to raise funds for its Trelissick landing stage scheme, including DEFRA and maritime organisations. The ferry service will be run by existing private operators.

Both Aqua Cab and Fal River Links are run by private operators. One of these, Cornwall Ferries, also runs the Park and Float/Ride scheme (but has contracted out the bus element of the service to local bus company Truronian).

Costs

Individual costs are difficult to separate out. Cornwall County Council was the main funder of the Park and Float/Ride scheme, as it bought the car park site. This was then leased to the National Maritime Museum who sublet it to Cornwall Ferries, the operator of the scheme. Workshops on the site are let out, and over the winter the site is used for laying up boats.

All the ferries are run on a commercial basis. Currently a ticket costs £4.50 for an all-day Float Pass, with reductions for children. Family tickets cost £12.50, for two adults and up to three children.

Cornwall County Council and Cornwall Ferries contribute to the salary of an officer who manages the Park and Float/Ride scheme and the production of marketing materials for the Fal River Links scheme. In 2004 these combined costs were approximately £30,000.

The cost of the landing stage project at Trelissick Gardens is some £425,000, including a thorough site investigation to minimise its impact on the estuary environment.

Results so far

The schemes come into operation in Summer 2004; so monitoring figures are not yet available. However, the business plan for Trelissick Gardens estimates that 10 per cent of visitors will arrive by boat.

Future plans include a smart card for through-ticketing across boats, buses and trains, and combined travel and entry discounts for local attractions.

Advice for implementation

Phil Dyke, Site Manager at Trelissick, is clear that having an overall strategy made implementation easier. 'You could always refer back to the document when bidding for money,' he comments.

Also important, was the identification of a lead partner among the ferry operators. They convinced the other businesses to work together to market the whole area, rather than just their own particular service. The group has produced good promotional materials, making it easy for visitors to plan trips which don't involve a car.

Further information: Bill Mitcham, Project Officer, Cornwall County Council. Tel: 01872 322 381 or bmitcham@cornwallcc.gov.uk

Fal River Links. Tel: 01872 862312 or www.falriverlinks.co.uk

An unusual park and ride scheme at Falmouth

5.62 The Swiftsure Lancaster Canal Water Bus

The Swiftsure Water Bus project is a demonstration project to provide a water bus service operating out of Carnforth south to Lancaster and north to Tewitfield, along the Lancaster Canal. The service began operation in August 2004.

This is a multi-agency project and the partners include the Countryside Agency, North Lancashire Rural Transport Partnership, British Waterways, the Carnforth Market Town Partnership, Budgie Bikes, Lancashire County Council, Lancaster City Council and the Lancaster Canal Trust.

Project funding of £235,000 was secured and the Countryside Agency agreed to contribute as part of its Market Towns initiative, since transport was found to be a key issue for Carnforth.

The water bus is intended primarily to provide a rural transport service for village communities within the Lancaster Canal area, and to offer an alternative to the car for shopping trips and travel. The water bus integrates fully with existing public transport provision through the appropriate location of stopping places and the coordination of timetables. It is also designed to be attractive to tourists. The boat has cycle racks and there are cycle facilities along the towpath at points of access. Improvements to the towpath are also planned.

Research and feasibility studies were undertaken in 2003, by MBA students at Lancaster University. The initial one-year demonstration period will test the research, learn about the operation of the service in practice, and establish main areas of demand. A decision will then be made as to whether to continue the water-bus service.

Further information: Anne Bell, Countryside Agency Countryside Officer. Tel: 0161 237 1061 or anne.bell@countryside.gov.uk.

5.7 DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC APPROACH

5.71 The Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework

The Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework is the first example of a county-wide strategy for waterways regeneration. It is a strategic initiative to develop waterways across the county and includes a range of objectives, from improving opportunities for using the waterways and their towpaths, to boosting local economic activity.

Good practice

- county-wide plan for waterways regeneration and links to regional project
- clear strategic plan for developing the project
- multi-objectives – delivering transport, economic and social benefits

Organisations involved

Lincolnshire County Council, British Waterways, the Environment Agency, and others.

The Scheme

The Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework is a strategic initiative aimed at optimising the use of the county's 746 miles (1,194km) of waterways. Published in 2002, it provides a vision for the waterways that brings together economic, community and environmental issues and raises the profile of Lincolnshire's waterways as a tourist destination for a variety of leisure uses.

The project looks at the waterways in their complete setting, and aims to create 'corridors of sustainable economic opportunity' throughout the Objective 2 area. As Mary Powell, Lincolnshire Development's Tourism Officer, says 'Lincolnshire's decision-makers were looking for an initiative which would deliver a step-change in economic performance.'

The project's development is tied in closely with the development of the Fens Waterways Link. This will connect Lincolnshire's waterways with the rest of the national network (see map page 50).

Who was involved?

The Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework process was initiated in 2000 by an informal partnership consisting of all the local authorities, East Midlands Development Agency, British Waterways, the Environment Agency, Sustrans, Lincolnshire Tourism, Church Tourism, IWA and the Slea Navigation Trust. Following the publication of the framework, Lincolnshire County Council, the Environment Agency and British Waterways agreed to form the Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership (LWP) to take the work forward.

Cost

The potential scope of the development framework is large. Total costs could reach £15-20 million over the next five years. Parts of Lincolnshire have been designated as eligible for European funding, and Part I and Part II project bids for European Regional Development funds have been secured totalling £886,000 and £2.5 million respectively.

Results so far

This funding will enable the LWP to complete projects such as a new multi-user path along the River Witham between Washingborough station and Five Mile Bridge, and improved mooring facilities at Saxilby.

Further transport projects will include:

- extending the River Witham multi-user path from Five Mile Bridge to Anton's Gowt – thus completing the entire route from Lincoln to Boston
- promoting the Slea Navigation as a leisure corridor for boaters, walkers, cyclists and nature lovers – through marketing, the organisation of major events, and the development of new walking and cycling routes
- other actions to restore habitats and improve moorings

Advice for implementation

This large-scale project demonstrates the benefits of local authorities working together to develop an overarching strategy. The Waterways Development Framework has been pushed forward effectively and its aims are reflected in the Regional Planning Guidance, the county's draft Structure Plan and in the emerging LTP.

The framework sets out a clear vision and provides a sound basis for securing funding and project development. The strategy also creates the potential for delivering major schemes – such as the entirely new waterway link with the Fens – which might be seen to be too expensive or complicated when viewed in isolation.

Moreover, the strategy shows how waterways can contribute to multiple objectives such: as the promotion of tourism; supporting the provision of new facilities in rural villages and market towns; the encouragement of new waterway-related businesses; and the promotion of farm diversification and rural regeneration.

Further information: Mary Powell, Tourism Officer, Lincolnshire Development. Tel: 01522 823438 or mary.powell@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Lincolnshire Waterways – a strategic and ambitious initiative

5.72 The Wolverton Market Town Regeneration Plan

The canal is a much loved part of Wolverton. Consultation shows that the local community wants it to be an integral part of any regeneration plan.

Good Practice

- generating local interest and engagement at the start of a process
- developing a vision
- seeing the canal as an opportunity rather than a barrier

Organisations involved

Wolverton and Greenleys Town Council, Milton Keynes Council, British Waterways, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency.

The Scheme

Wolverton lies on the northern edge of Milton Keynes. Included as part of the Sustainable Communities Plan, it is about to enter a period of change with the population of the central parish area expected to double from 5,000 to 10,000.

At Wolverton, the canal is a popular local feature but is not always easily accessible

In 2002, as one of the Countryside Agency Beacon Towns, Wolverton undertook a Market Town Health Check. This led to the development of a 'vision' for the town in which the canal is seen as a major element. One of the key findings of the consultation was that the canal was a much loved amenity, despite acting as a barrier between residential and employment areas and being difficult to reach from the town centre.

The vision states that in 20 years' time the canal will 'have become a major frontage of the town and been opened up to offer places to sit and enjoy a drink, play and walk. The canal itself will have been brought into a marina in the centre of the town. There will be links across the canal, making access easier'.

Implementation of the vision has begun, with local consultation a key part of each step. Building on the interest generated by the initial Health Check, a local umbrella group, Wolverton Unlimited, was founded in October 2003. This is open to everyone who lives, works or studies in the town. There are already 350 members and the aim is to increase this to 500.

Steering groups have been established to guide projects and liaise with external bodies, such as British Waterways. Their meetings are open to anyone from the town. The Canal steering group (working with the Wolverton Society for Arts and Heritage) is supporting the creation of a community garden by the canal, and the construction of a bridge to link a neighbouring residential community to the town. Resurfacing work on the towpath is also planned, as are access improvements from the canal to the train station.

Who is involved?

The most important people involved are the people of Wolverton themselves. They have contributed to the vision for the canal, including the ambitious long-term plan of creating a new marina and the idea of shuttle boats serving areas outside town. An impressive 10 per cent of the population responded to the initial consultation in 2002. The projects now under way reflect the benefits of the consultation process. Partners, such as British Waterways, are now being asked not what to do, but how to do it.

Costs

Wolverton could receive as much as £7.3m for regeneration, as part of the Milton Keynes growth area. Funding for the work that is currently taking place along the canal has come from planning gain, the Countryside Agency's Doorstep Green funding stream and the landfill tax. Of this, £70,000 has been allocated for the creation of the community garden and £40,000 for towpath improvements. The ambitious plans for the canal's future will cost far more, and money and is likely to come from a variety of sources – including Section 106 agreements from new development along the canal.

Results so far

The main result has been the community involvement and consultation. The profile of the canal has been enhanced, and the importance of including it in a positive way within any redevelopment is now clear.

Advice for Implementation

From the start of the Market Town Health Check in 2002, the project has created a vision for the development of the whole town which includes the canal. A range of public participation tools have been used. For example, the vision of how the town will be in 20 years' time was written down and distributed. A video was also produced, with clips from the town as it is now and voice-overs by local schoolchildren quoting from the vision document.

The creation of Wolverton Unlimited as an umbrella organisation provides a clear contact point for everyone who is interested. It costs £1 to join and each member is given a symbolic piece of puzzle that interlocks with all the others. Steering group meetings are open, and the minutes are placed on the website for all to read.

Most importantly, by having a clear vision of how the canal can be used that is supported by the local community there is always something to refer back to as new plans and projects are produced.

Further Information: Marie Osborne, Wolverton Unlimited.
Tel: 01908 225600 or marieosborne@wolvertonunlimited.com

SECTION SIX

This section summarises the lessons from the case studies and recommends key criteria for successfully developing new schemes. It sets out the final conclusions of the report.

6.1 LEARNING FROM OTHERS

The range of waterway projects across the country is inspiring. As section 5 demonstrates, the initiatives taking place are diverse and approaches to implementation and funding vary widely. However, there are a number of general lessons that can be drawn from this review which can give guidance on the successful development of future projects. These lessons are discussed below.

6.11 Vision and strategy

The creation of major new routes and integrated transport projects needs clear vision and strategy. In some cases the delivery of schemes has followed several years of preparatory work. For example the Fal River Links project, which is now coming into operation, was originally based on research and consultancy work initiated in 1999. The Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework is another example of strategy development over a number of years. This is now providing a strong framework for project development.

In these examples and others, the work involved in preparing a vision and strategy is amply rewarded because it:

- helps to stitch project partners into the process
- provides a clear context for project development, which enables sequential stages to follow more smoothly
- assists in putting forward a convincing argument for funding

6.12 Projects need people

The success of projects can often be attributed to one or two key people who have acted as indomitable project champions. Schemes such as Hackney's waste-on-water pilot scheme, the Swiftsure Lancaster Canal Bus, and the creation of Access for All trails in Hertfordshire have all benefited from having strong and determined project leaders. The lesson here is that it is often helpful to identify a key person early on to drive a project forward.

Ensuring the long-term success of projects can also depend on having staff in place to provide support. Major projects, such as the Camel Trail and the Trans Pennine Trail, have project officers and administrative support to ensure the schemes continue to develop and prosper.

Involving local people in projects is crucial to success – both during project development and beyond. The River Parrett Trail project has put strong emphasis on community involvement – running local workshops to design benches and bridges for the trail and organising annual family events around relevant river themes. Involving local people can extend to actually paying key people to work on the project. For example, in Wolverton, administrative support for the Market Town initiative was provided by paid local participants.

Finally, local businesses can play a key role in the success of schemes. They can provide skills and expertise, facilities and other assistance in kind, or direct financial support. With the Fal River Links project, for example, local ferry operators were the lead partners in organising, marketing and financing a network of local ferries.

6.13 More than transport

Creating new waterside projects can deliver more than transport benefits. With several of the case studies, such as Wolverton and the Lincolnshire Waterways Development Framework, the transport elements are secondary to the broader goals of encouraging regeneration and economic activity. In Cornwall, the Camel Trail is playing an important role in the Health Action Zone's Pedal Back the Years health initiative.

Waterway projects have the potential to contribute to a broad range of local authority and community objectives. These can include promoting healthy activity, town regeneration, local engagement and economic activity, as well as sustainable transport benefits. Project developers should work across local authority departments, and with a range of other organisations, to maximise such opportunities.

6.14 Understanding the potential user

It is interesting to note that in several cases the way people use projects does not necessarily match expectations. For example, routes which are ostensibly designed as long-distance leisure paths (such as the Trans Pennine Trail) are much more frequently used for short trips by local people. In Lincoln, the postal service is making use of the new riverside paths for deliveries – an unexpected bonus. While the Camel Trail, originally designed for multi-use, is overwhelmingly used by cyclists.

This does not undermine the success of these schemes, but points to the importance of gaining a good understanding of the potential use of a route or project at an early stage. Assessing potential user needs, mapping and accessibility audits (as highlighted in section 3) can help here. In this way, project design can maximise the potential for linking new routes with existing facilities, promoting their use both for leisure and utility journeys and ensuring the design matches the users' aspirations.

6.15 Managing the impacts

One of the clearest lessons to emerge is the importance of planning access to waterway projects. As with other attractive rural destinations, waterway routes (such as the Kennet and Avon Canal or the Camel Trail) can experience the problems of too many people trying to visit. This has sometimes resulted in crowding on the route as well as congestion in the surrounding area caused by people driving to the site.

Project developers should think in advance about access to new routes and, in particular, the need to manage demand for car access. The development of Visitor Travel Plans (as highlighted in section 4) can be a strategic way of tackling this issue.

6.16 Good communication

Successful projects have almost always employed good communication techniques. Early publicity for new schemes, marketing of new transport services, the provision of maps, and publicity websites can all play an important role.

Practical measures, such as clear signage of a new route and its links to other destinations, can be important. In Lincoln, the new riverside path is clearly signed as part of the wider network in the city. Alternatively, attractive printed publications – such as the Birds by Bus leaflet advertising access to nature reserves by boat on the Broads – can also help ensure project uptake and ongoing use.

6.17 Securing funding

The costs of waterway projects vary greatly, from relatively modest schemes like the £120,000 Spen Valley Greenway to Dewsbury Cycle Link, to the £30 million Trans Pennine Trail. To secure essential funding most project developers have pursued a range of funding sources. These have included:

- local transport funds – such as those provided by LTP funds. (In future, a DfT Walking and Cycling Fund tool kit will provide funds to support small-scale non-highway improvements for walkers and cyclists)
- lottery funds – Millennium Commission grants and the Heritage Lottery funds
- Countryside Agency grants – such as those through the (now closed) Rural Transport Partnership (RTP) scheme
- British Waterways funding
- Freight Facility Grants
- Single Regeneration Budget funds
- european funds – such as Regional Development Funds
- section 106 planning agreements have been used for a variety of access improvements
- private investment

In addition, some schemes benefit from ongoing sources of income to help manage and maintain routes. On the Camel Trail, for example, annual licence fees for hire bikes (paid by the bike rental firms) raise revenue which directly helps to pay for a site ranger's salary and maintenance of the trail. On the sections of

the Kennet & Avon Canal which are part of the NCN, maintenance agreements have been drawn up between British Waterways and the relevant local authorities. These ensure an additional 10 per cent maintenance funding is provided by the local authorities to British Waterways to cover the extra costs of maintaining an upgraded path. In return, local authorities benefit from a high quality cycle route in the area.

6.18 Providing the motivation as well as the means

The projects reviewed here aim to increase opportunities for travel on and alongside waterways. As such they can provide the means for making sustainable travel choices. It is clear, however, that without a broader strategy to set the context in which travel choices are made, there is little guarantee that the outcome will help reduce traffic and congestion or promote modal shift. Projects like Lincoln's Greenways, which is part of a broader initiative to influence commuter travel choices, are clearly working in the right direction. Future projects are likely to be most successful if developed as part of a strategy which includes measures to influence travel choices and manage demand. In this way they can provide not just the means of changing transport choices, but the motivation as well. It is here that LTPs will play an important role.

6.2 KEY CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

From the lessons discussed above, ten key criteria for a successful project have been distilled. These are set out in Table 6 below and provide a quick reference point for project developers.

6.3 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS – THE NEXT ROUND

The projects reviewed here demonstrate the benefits of making use of waterways in transport initiatives. They also give an insight into what works well. The second round of LTPs offers a chance to extend this activity in future. Waterways projects, if well implemented, can help contribute to the achievement of key Government transport objectives: reducing congestion, improving accessibility, and promoting healthy activity through walking and cycling.

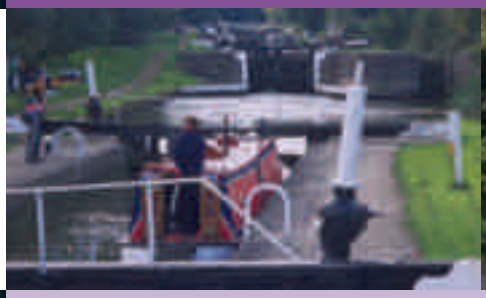
6.4 FINAL WORDS

Rivers and canals are often rich in natural beauty and historical interest. This guide highlights the important role they are starting to play as part of the modern transport system. Nevertheless, the full potential of the waterways remains untapped. The next round of LTPs represents an important opportunity to realise this potential and to stitch rural waterways into the wider transport network – for the benefit of everyone.

Table 6: Key criteria for success

CHECKLIST OF CRITERIA	✓	✖
Vision and supporting strategy	✓	
Working in partnership	✓	
Project 'champions'	✓	
Involving local people	✓	
Achieving multiple objectives	✓	
Understanding users needs	✓	
Marketing and communication	✓	
Good rural design	✓	
Managing access and providing incentives to change travel behaviour	✓	
Sound financial resources	✓	

SECTION SEVEN



ANNEX 1
CONTACT DETAILS OF USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY-RAIL PARTNERSHIPS (ACORP)

Brian Jackson Centre
New North Parade
Huddersfield, HS1 5JP
Tel: 01484 549 737
Fax: 01484 544 234
www.acorp.uk.com

ASSOCIATION OF INLAND NAVIGATION AUTHORITIES (AINA)

Fearns Wharf
Neptune Street
Leeds, LS9 8PB
Tel: 0113 2433 125
Fax: 0113 2458 394
www.aina.org.uk

BRITISH WATERWAYS

Willow Grange
Church Road
Watford
Hertfordshire, WD17 4QA
Tel: 01923 226 422
Fax: 01923 210 400
www.britishwaterways.co.uk

COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY

John Dower House
Crescent Place
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire, GL50 3RA
Tel: 01242 521 381
Fax: 01242 584 270
www.countryside.gov.uk

CYCLISTS TOURING CLUB (CTC)
Cotterell House
69 Meadrow
Godalming
Surrey, GU7 3HS
Tel: 0870 873 0060
Fax: 0870 873 0064
www.ctc.org.uk

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DR
Tel: 020 7944 8300
Fax: 020 7944 9622
www.dft.gov.uk

ENGLISH NATURE
Northminster House
Northminster
Peterborough, PE1 1UA
Tel: 01733 455000
Fax: 01733 568834
www.english-nature.org.uk

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
Rio House
Waterside Drive
Aztec West
Almondsbury
Bristol, BS32 4UD
Tel: 08708 506 506
Fax: 01454 624 409
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

FIELDFARE TRUST
7 Volunteer House
69 Crossgate
Cupar
Fife, KY15 5AS
Tel: 01334 657708
Fax: 01334 657978
www.fieldfare.org.uk

THE INLAND WATERWAYS AMENITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (IWAAC)
City Road Lock
38 Graham Street
London, N1 8JX
Tel: 020 7253 1745
Fax: 020 7490 7656
www.iwaac.org.uk

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION (IWA)
PO Box 114
Rickmansworth, WD3 1ZY
Tel: 01923 711 114
Fax: 01923 897 000
www.waterways.org.uk

THE NATIONAL TRUST
36 Queen Anne's Gate
London, SW1H 9AS
Tel: 0870 609 5380
Fax 020 7222 5097
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

THE RAMBLERS ASSOCIATION
2nd Floor, Camelford House
87-90 Albert Embankment
London, SE1 7TW
Tel: 020 7339 8500
Fax: 020 7339 8501
www.ramblers.org.uk

SUSTRANS
35 King Street
Bristol, BS1 4DZ
Tel: 0117 926 8893
Fax: 0117 929 4173
www.sustrans.org.uk

TRANSPORT 2000
The Impact Centre
12-18 Hoxton Street
London, N1 6NG
Tel: 020 7613 0743
Fax: 020 7613 5280
www.transport2000.org.uk

THE WATERWAYS TRUST
Llanthony Warehouse
Gloucester Docks
Gloucester, GL1 2EJ
Tel: 01452 318 220
Fax: 01452 318 202
www.thewaterwaystrust.org.uk

WILDLIFE TRUSTS PARTNERSHIPS
The Kiln
Waterside
Mather Road
Newark
Nottinghamshire, NG24 1WT
Tel: 0870 0367711
Fax: 0870 0360101
www.wildlifetrusts.org

YOUTH HOSTELS ASSOCIATION (YHA)
Trevelyan House
Dimple Road
Matlock
Derbyshire, DE4 3YH
Tel: 01629 592600
Fax: 01629 592702
www.yha.org.uk

ANNEX 2

EXTRACT FROM FULL GUIDANCE ON LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS, SECOND EDITION, DFT, DECEMBER 2004

Guidance on rural areas states:
'All LTPs covering significant rural areas should demonstrate that they have considered how to deliver better transport for those areas. Rural communities have diverse transport problems and opportunities. While capital investment schemes may sometimes be considered necessary (for example to improve road safety outcomes), a mix of public transport and flexible transport services, with community based transport initiatives will usually be more important in serving rural areas. It will therefore be important for authorities to demonstrate that funding mechanisms for proposed services have been considered. The Department has recently introduced legislative and regulatory changes to facilitate demand-responsive bus services, and will continue to promote and encourage new schemes of this kind.

Unlike urban areas where problems of lack of accessibility to jobs and essential services may be concentrated in specific areas, problems in rural areas can be hidden away in areas of apparent affluence or limited to small, local communities. Rural transport problems are especially acute for those without access to private cars. Accessibility planning should enable the accessibility needs of people living and working in rural areas to be identified, and should ensure targeted measures can be included in LTPs. Local authorities should also consider how they could improve accessibility by ensuring services are provided in ways that reduce the need to travel.

Tourism is particularly important to the rural economy; where appropriate LTPs should set out plans for supporting tourism that include protecting sensitive areas from inappropriate traffic and facilitating public transport use, walking, horse riding and cycling.' (Part 2, paragraphs 48-50).

ANNEX 3

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AINA	The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities
DEFRA	The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfT	The Department for Transport
EA	Environmental Assessment
EMDA	East Midlands Development Agency
IWA	Inland Waterways Association
IWAAC	Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council
LTP	Local Transport Plan
LWP	Lincolnshire Waterways Partnership
NCN	National Cycle Network
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
RPG	Regional Planning Guidance
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RTP	Rural Transport Partnership
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
TPT	Trans Pennine Trail
VTP	Visitor Travel Plan

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CONTACT:
National Support Unit, British Waterways
Canal Lane, Hatton, Warwick CV 357LJ
Tel: 01926 626 139
Email: enquiries.nsu@britishwaterways.co.uk

Prepared by Lilli Matson, Transport & Environment Consultant and The Transport 2000 Good Practice Unit August 2004

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